Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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POLL RESULTS

Do you agree with the U.S. Labor report that further increasing the minimum wage will hurt the local economy?

Yes-**47**

No-**68**

No opinion-**6**

Sunday February 3, 2008

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Final Push

Sen. John McCain campaigns for a Super Tuesday knockout in the Republican presidential race as Democratic rivals worked the West.

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New Island

Running out of space in its crowded capital, this republic of 1,200 islands thought it had a can't-miss solution: build another island.

ASIA...Page 15

Rio Carnival

A two-story high lion led an army of spinning women in gold-and-red hoop skirts Saturday night to open the carnival parade.

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February fuel rates lessen, but remains high. **PAGE 3**

Some at CUC among highest paid

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The cash-strapped Commonwealth Utilities Corp. employs some of the highest paid employees in government.

CUC personnel data showed that executive director Anthony Guerrero, who has the largest salary at the utility, made $84,000 a year before the 10-percent pay cut that the governor recently imposed on CUC.

The second highest paid is senior engineer John Onedera. His salary was only

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NEW PRISON JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Fr. Isaac Ayuyu blesses the basketball court of the new state-of-the-art adult correctional facility, officially called the Vicente Taman Seman Memorial Building, in Susupe during its opening ceremony Saturday morning. ***See related story on Page 5.***

Chair of defunct CTC arrested for alleged theft

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Agents of the Attorney General's Investigative Unit arrested last week the former chairman of the defunct Commonwealth Telecommunications Commission for allegedly stealing $88,202.92 from CTC by issuing unauthorized checks to himself.

According to the report of Public Auditor investigator Rolando Decena, James Michael P. Fitzgerald wrote himself a total of 28 CTC checks between April and October 2006.

Decena said none of these 28 checks have supporting documents and none were properly authorized.

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WRO spent $79K on travel, per diem in '07

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Tenorio

The Washington Representative's Office spent nearly $80,000 on travel and per diem over the past year, it was learned on Friday.

Pete A. Tenorio, the CNMI's resident representative to the nation's capital, reported that his 11-man office incurred $29,000 in travel costs and $50,000 in per diem payments from February 2007 to January 2008.

Tenorio made the disclosure in response to an Open Government Act request by the Taotao Tano citizen group.

Taotao Tano president Greg Cruz said they find "disturbing" the per diems that Tenorio's office collected. He said the Office of the Public Auditor should look into the matter.

Most expensive was Tenorio's visit to the CNMI in February 2007. He accompanied U.S. Senate staffers Allen Stayman and Josh Johnson as they met with

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'Palms Resort to become jewel in local hotel industry'

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial regrets the exodus of Japanese investment but at the same time welcomed the investment of other companies—especially local ones—in the CNMI's tourism industry.

The islands' chief executive made this remark during the opening of Palms Resort Saipan Friday night, a day after United Micronesian Development Association, Inc. bought the former Hotel Nikko Saipan property from JAL Group.

Fitial served as the event's guest speaker.

"Do I regret the loss of Japanese investments? Yes, I do. But I do not regret Kumho Asiana's substantial commitment,

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Local

A therapy of laughter with Augie T. at Club V

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Hawaii's famous comedian Augie T. at his wackiest during the Comedy Show at the Club V of Saipan Grand Hotel Saturday night.

By CLARISSA DAVID
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

"Comedy takes us away from all the craziness in our life," Augie T. tells his delighted audience as the hilarity died down Saturday night at Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V.

Born Augusto Tulba in Kalihi, Hawaii, comedian, radio and TV personality Augie T. was here on Saipan for a two-night comedy show for the benefit of the Northern Marianas College Foundation.

Jose "Dynamite" Figueras, who regularly goes with Augie T. in his shows, served as the opening act.

Augie T. said that it was actually his third time to be on Saipan. He first came to the island as an opening act for the Hawaiian band Kapena for their show at Pacific Gardenia about 10 years ago.

"It's always been like, you know, you would come back because the culture here and in Hawaii, it's almost the same. It's really relatable… and Saipan having a lot of Filipinos, I know it's gonna get off really well."

The half-Filipino comedian was in his best element, leaving the audience roaring with laughter the whole hour and a half of the show.

Augie T.'s comedy act included talking about his stay on Saipan, his experiences from his shows in Hawaii, Guam and Japan, and even managed to link up his spiels with the late crocodile hunter Steve Irwin.

He believes that people love to hear someone talk about their lives. He also said that he is able to vent out his frustrations through his comedy show. "I'm a frustrated man, like everybody else… so it's like therapy… you get therapy, I get therapy."

Augie T. disclosed that what he does is observational comedy. He added that he doesn't make fun of people, unless they do something stupid. "Sometimes we have to talk about [that] stupidity."

Governor and First Lady Benigno and Josie Fitial, who were among the VIP audience during the Saturday night show, were both up and game for Augie T.'s humor.

Augie T. also made a brilliant impersonation of his father's tone of voice and openly talked about his gay son. "I don't care what people think about it… He is my son. You have to be who you are, you know."

Asked about his father's reaction to his impersonation, Augie T. said that his parents know about it and they love it. "My mom and my dad are like my number one fans… they're so supportive. Every parent wants to see their children do well, especially Filipino parents."

Augie T. found the show's crowd wonderful for both nights. "It was really energetic. I loved it."

NMC Foundation president Ben Babauta was pleased with the huge turnout. "Tonight, [there were] probably about 300… last night was about 200. We pretty much sold out all the tickets, which is great."

Babauta added that the comedy show is only one of a number of events that NMC Foundation has scheduled for 2008. The next one would be a golf tournament slated on April at Laulau Bay. He said all the proceeds from these fundraising events go to the NMC Foundation.

NMC president Carmen Fernandez said that the show's success will have them planning on bringing it back soon.

Babauta and Fernandez expressed their gratitude to all the sponsors and the people who helped make the event possible. "We are very appreciative to everyone for their support to the college and all the students," Fernandez said.

The sponsors of the comedy show included NMC Foundation, Continental Airlines, Tan Holdings Corp., Club V, *Saipan Tribune*, Saipan Grand Hotel, Power 99 and The Rock, Pacific Trading Co., PTI, Elite Printing, and Shell Marianas.

Raraina Restaurant
February 14th, 2008
6:30pm – 10:00pm
Pink Rose Romance
Valentine Special Course Menu includes:
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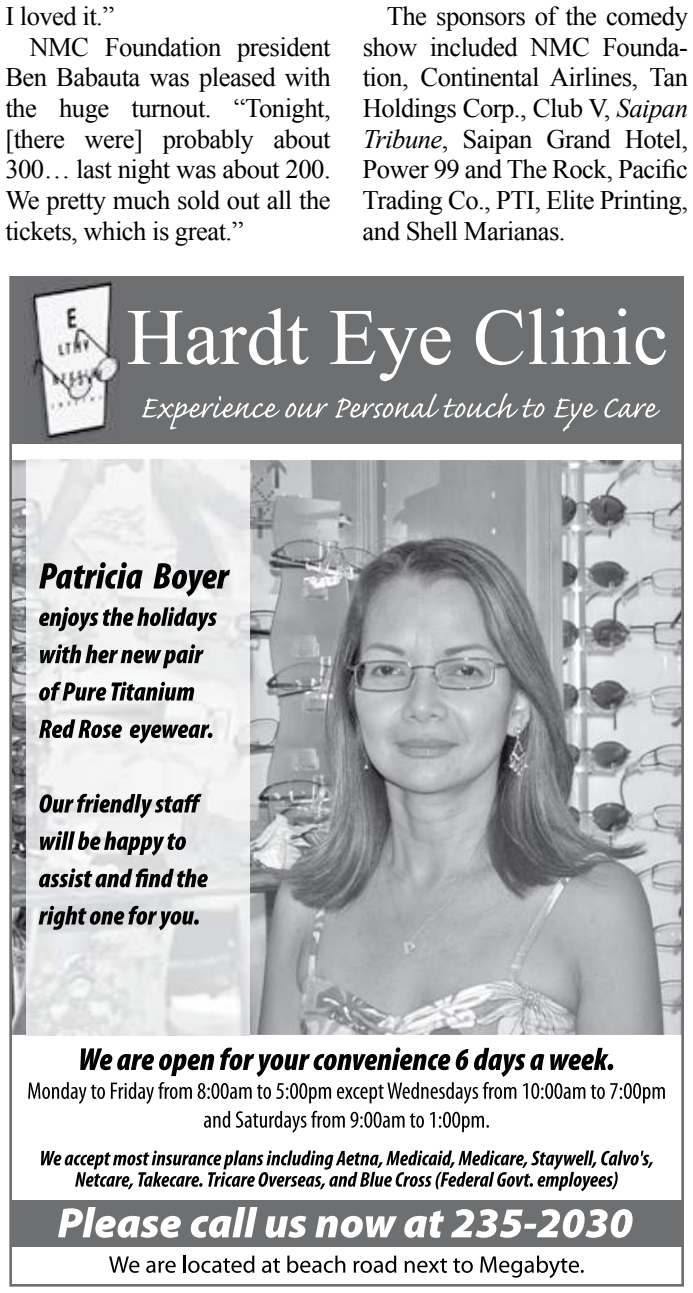
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February fuel rates lessen, but still high

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Although the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. slightly reduced its February electric fuel rates, the rates themselves remain very high.

CUC announced that the fuel rates this month went down to 25.3 cents per kilowatt-hour from 25.8 cents per kWh in January.

This means that CNMI residents and businesses should continue conserving electricity as the fuel rates remain over 25 cents per kWh.

The 25.8 cents per kWh is the highest ever fuel rate that was implemented the past three months. This month's 25.3 cents per kWh is the second highest.

Residents enjoyed the lowest electric fuel rate at 17.6 cents per kWh in October 2007, just right before the election.

Under the February electric fuel rates, the rates for residential customers will be 25.3 cents per kWh for the first 1,000 kWh and 29.7 cents per kWh for over 1,000 kWh.

On top of that, residential customers will be paying a fixed rate of $3.50 in customer charges per month.

With respect to businesses, they will be paying the fixed 8.6 cents for electric non-fuel rate and 25.3 cents for electric fuel rate, for a total of 33.9 cents for all kWh billed.

In addition, businesses will be assessed a fixed monthly customer charge of $7.67.

For government agencies, they will be charged 9.1 cents for electric non-fuel rate and 25.3 cents for electric fuel rate, for a total of 34.4 cents for all kWh billed. Government agencies also pay an additional monthly customer charge of $7.67.

For non-conforming load, they will pay 22.2 cents in electric non-fuel rate and 25.3 cents in electric fuel rate, for a total of 47.5 cents for all kWh billed. On top of it, they will be assessed a fixed monthly customer charge of $56.

Residential customers experienced the lowest fuel rates only in October 2007 when Public Law 15-94 took effect, putting a cap on power rates at 17.6 cents per kWh.

With the administration's signing of emergency regulations on Nov. 9, 2007, the electric fuel rates for residential customers jumped from 17.6 cents per kWh to the highest ever of 25.8 cents per kWh from that month until January 2008.

Lawmakers torn between helping CUC and easing public's burden

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios says he is not sure the Legislature can grant the governor's request to repeal a law that prohibits the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. from setting unregulated rates.

Palacios, who authored Public Law 15-94 in the previous Legislature, said that lawmakers are torn between helping CUC pay for fuel and easing the burden on consumers.

"This is a real dilemma that we have. We really must search our souls before we can make a decision. As much as we want to help solve the power crisis, we cannot allow CUC to raise the rates to a point where families cannot afford it. What's the use of having reliable power if people cannot afford it?" Palacios said.

Palacios, along with other legislative leaders, met with CUC on Friday to discuss the utility's lack of funds for power generation fuel. At the meeting, CUC echoed the governor's plea for the Legislature to repeal P.L. 15-94, which brought residential power rates down in October 2007 and prohibits the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. from setting rates unilaterally.

Palacios

CUC has been declared under a state of emergency, and as such, is under the administration's direct control.

Public Law 15-94 took effect on Oct. 4, 2007 as a result of a legislative override of the governor's veto.

The law cut the monthly customer charge from $7.67 to $3.50. It scrapped the non-fuel component of power rates for residential customers who consume 1,000 kWh or less in a month's period. It also reduced the fuel component to 17.6 cents per kWh for the first 1,000 kWh.

But the 17.6-cent rate remained effective for one month only.

By November, CUC promulgated regulations that allowed CUC to charge customers for the full cost of power generation fuel. From November 2007 through January 2008, customers were charged 25.8 cents per kWh. This month, the electric fuel rate is slightly down at 25.3 cents per kWh.

Lawmakers argue that the regulations were illegal, as they changed power rates without the required PUC order.

Even with the adjustments, the governor said, CUC has suffered a shortfall and has required the central government to subsidize fuel expenses.

Fitial off to Japan for three-day visit

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial is off to a three-day visit to Japan to meet with a top travel agency.

The governor will be in Japan until Wednesday for a business meeting with executives of Kinki Nippon Tourist Company, who paid him a visit last week.

The business conference will take place tomorrow, Feb. 5, 2008.

MVA managing director Perry Tenorio is traveling with the governor.

"The governor expects to bring back good news from Japan," said press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr.

KNT has been working with airlines to operate charter flights between Tokyo and Rota. Japan Airlines initially planned on providing the flights, but it backed out. Continental Airlines has been reported to be interested in proceeding with the plan.

Pacific Development Inc., a tour company doing business in the Northern Marianas, is a subsidiary of Kinki Nippon Tourist Company.

Former PDI president Joji Kawaguchi recently moved back to Tokyo to head a division under KNT that focuses on enhancing promotions for the CNMI. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

NISSAN
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Sentra | #7L611483 | Gray | $16,990.00
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Frontier SE | #7C408903 | Silver | $26,990.00
Pathfinder | #6C674658 | Granite | $28,990.00
FORD | STOCK # | COLOR | PRICE
Ranger | #7PA31119 | White | $16,990.00
Fusion | #7R127180 | Pearl | $18,990.00
Escape | #7KB45887 | Silver | $19,990.00
F-150 | #6NB05745 | White | $21,990.00
Sport Trac | #7UA65392 | Gold | $26,990.00
HONDA | STOCK # | COLOR | PRICE
Fit | #7S025556 | Mist | $14,995.00
Fit Sport | #7S025501 | Blue | $16,495.00
Civic DX | #7L061948 | White | $16,995.00
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Ridgeline | #7H505732 | Silver | $32,990.00
KIA | STOCK # | COLOR | PRICE
Rio | #76292370 | White | $12,995.00
Rio | #76292373 | Gray | $12,995.00
Sportage | #77353763 | Silver | $17,695.00
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PALMS

From Page 1

or Tan Holding's substantial commitment, or UMDA's substantial commitment to our tourism industry and to our overall economy. Our tourism industry still holds promise. The key lies in increasing flight capacity and providing destination enhancement. And this administration is committed to working with our private sector partners to find the keys to unlocking our full potential for tourism," he said.

The governor said that some sectors might not look favorably upon the UMDA-JAL transaction, lamenting it as yet another example of the retreat of Japanese investments in the CNMI over the past several years.

"This, they argue, falls on top of the [Saipan] Grand Hotel, Dai-ichi Hotel, and LaoLao Bay [Golf Resort], but look at how those acquired assets turned out—they've all improved and made substantial additional investments. Some have taken advantage of the qualifying certificate program, investing millions of dollars into their acquired properties. And all have improved their attention to the local market," said Fitial.

He made special mention to Kumho Asiana's LaoLao Bay Golf Resort investment, saying that it has made great progress since turning over ownership, including UMDA's tenure, and is now embarking on a $50-million plan, with Daewoo Engineering set to start construction in March.

As well as congratulating the new owners of the San Roque hotel, Fitial also said he is confident of UMDA's ability to make the renamed Palms Resort yet another jewel in the hotel industry of the Commonwealth.

"I have every confidence in UMDA's ability to add value to this property and to make this asset perform. UMDA is a pioneer in the development of our islands. Over the years, it has successfully managed and operated many diverse business interests in Micronesia.

"UMDA is a good corporate citizen with a strong sense of social responsibility for the CNMI and the other islands in our region. I believe the former Nikko Hotel is now in good hands, with good corporate stewards, and I believe our community will benefit from this transaction and from this new hotel resort," he said.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial gives his remarks during the opening ceremony of the Palms Resort Saipan Friday night.

For his part, UMDA president and chief executive officer Russell K. Snow vowed not to let the governor down and promised that the company will do everything to make Palms Resort a first class facility.

"We have purchased this hotel for three reasons—we believe in Micronesia, we believe in the CNMI, and we believe on Saipan," he said. "We will make this a first class hotel for the visitors of the hotel but as importantly we will make it a first class hotel for all those who live here."

He also reiterated Micronesia Resort Inc.'s marching orders to treat off-island and local guests with the same warm hospitality Saipan has always been known for.

"Our mission is to enhance to experience that the community has at this hotel. We will greet the local community with the same enthusiasm and warmth that we greet every visitor. This is your home too."

Despite the exodus of Japanese investment, Fitial said his administration is not ready to give up on the market and vowed to work even harder to keep wooing and serving visitors from the Land of the Rising Sun.

"We will never give up on the Japanese tourism market, given the deep historic and cultural ties between Japan and the CNMI," he said.

The governor also reminded UMDA that the about the historic significance of the old Nikko Hotel.

"UMDA, the new owners, know that the Emperor of Japan stayed here and I trust that the hotel's standards of excellence will not only be maintained but improved under new management," he said.

Aside from Fitial and Snow, UMDA chairman Jose R. Lifoifoi and Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio also spoke during the opening ceremony.

The islands tourism industry was also well represented during the event as MVA chair Jerry Tan and Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands chair Lynn Knight were in attendance as well as officials of various tour agencies and hotels.

CHAIR

From Page 1

Also included was a CTC check that Fitzgerald allegedly used to pay for his wife's plane ticket to Florida.

Fitzgerald was arrested on Tinian Thursday for theft. He was taken to the Superior Court on Saipan for a hearing on Friday.

A $30,000 cash bail was initially imposed for his temporary liberty. But associate judge Kenneth Govendo allowed the defendant to post a $1,000 cash bail and $9,000 property bond.

Decena stated in his report that in January 2007, OPA received information from Deloitte and Touche that Fitzgerald as then chairman wrote about $60,000 in CTC checks between July and August 2006.

Deloitte and Touche uncovered the unauthorized checks when the company made a follow-up to CTC for their response to the audit recommendations and if there were any subsequent events that would affect CTC's financial statements.

It was then CTC consultant and office manager MaryLou Ada who informed Deloitte and Touche about the unauthorized issuance of checks.

Decena said that from June 6 to Aug. 31, 2006, Fitzgerald wrote 19 checks to himself in a total amount of $55,704.90 without authorization from then CTC commissioners Norman T. Tenorio and Josephine DLG. Mesta.

Decena said that during an interview with another OPA investigator on May 2, 2007, Mesta stated that during their Oct. 3, 2006 meeting, they asked Fitzgerald why his wife's plane ticket was purchased using CTC funds.

Fitzgerald explained that the travel agency only made a mistake. He also denied he had paid himself.

But when Mesta showed the CTC checks that were issued to him and Tenorio asked him to explain, the chairman only stared at the checks and at Mesta without any response.

After that meeting Fitzgerald sent an e-mail to Mesta in which he apologized for what he did.

Decena said that Ada disclosed in an interview with an OPA investigator on June 21, 2007, that during her employment at CTC, she observed that the chairman had sole custody of the checks stored in the safe inside the room he occupies.

Ada's concern was how the checks and the financial matters were being handled by Fitzgerald.

Ada requested Tenorio for authorization to ask a bank for records to find checks that were issued by Fitzerald.

Ada said that she told Tenorio she has never worked before where the chairman is the only one who has sole knowledge and custody of all the financial affairs of the commission and that there is no check and balance.

Ada stated that after she obtained the bank statements and all the checks, she discovered several checks were made payable to Fitzgerald without supporting documents.

She also found out that Fitzgerald used a CTC check to pay for his wife's plane ticket for a conference attended by Fitzgerald, Mesta, and CTC legal counsels Sean Frink and Alan Barak, held in Clearwater, Florida.

Ada informed Tenorio about her findings.

Decena said that during an interview by an OPA investigator on June 27, 2007, Tenorio stated that neither he nor Mesta approved the checks that Fitzgerald wrote to himself.

Tenorio said he confronted Fitzgerald during the Oct. 3, 2006 meeting about the checks, and the chairman openly admitted his wrongdoing and promised to find ways to reimburse the commission.

Decena said that copies of CTC cancelled checks show that there are nine more CTC checks with a total amount of $32,498.02 that were all issued to Fitzgerald.

In October 2006, CTC was abolished with the signing of the Public Utilities Commission Law.

WRO

From Page 1

local leaders on CNMI-federal issues. The trip cost $4,077, and Tenorio's per diem totaled just a little less than $9,000.

His other major travels were for the State of the Washington Office Report, Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne's visit to the Commonwealth, the Office of Insular Affairs' business opportunities conference on Guam, and last month's inauguration ceremonies for the 16th Legislature.

Six other WRO contractors or employees traveled on public funds. They are Edward Pangelinan, Roman Palacios, Herbert Yamada, Clarissa Sablan, Malinda Matson, and Walter F. Villagomez.

Tenorio justified his office's travel costs in a letter to Taotao Tano president Gregorio Cruz.

"At first glance these amounts may seem excessive. Traveling to and from the CNMI is an obligation for the resident representative and is a valuable tool in keeping me in close contact with people back home. I cannot adequately represent the interests of our people without direct contact with them," he said.

However, Taotao Tano's Cruz asked why Tenorio is collecting per diems when traveling to and from the CNMI since he is from here. "Is the Washington Representative collecting per diems for lodging in the CNMI? The government housing given is free, including government vehicles are available at no cost," he said.

Tenorio said that travel costs had, in fact, been minimized. WRO no longer attends military graduations even when requested by families whose sons and daughters have enlisted in military service.

"When a family of a soldier contacts me and asks me to represent them at their child's graduation ceremony, I now have the unpleasant task of telling them that my budget will not allow me to do this for them. At a time when our nation is at war and many of these young men and women are being deployed to these war-torn regions, it has become even more difficult for me. But it is a decision that I was forced to make," Tenorio said.

He said he had to turn down invitations from CNMI residents throughout the country "who long for a visit from their elected officials." One exemption, however, was a trip by two of his staffers to Boise in 2007 to attend the CNMI Labor Day gathering on his behalf. He said the "minimal costs"—$2,800 for both staffers—were justified because it enabled WRO to be in touch with many CNMI people at one time.

"I can go on about the travel but as you can see, although costs are high, the reasons behind these trips are justifiable," Tenorio said.

Of particular concern, however, for Taotao Tano were the following expenses:

■ Washington Rep. collected $ 8,966.75 per diem escorting Senate staff members to meet local leaders in the CNMI on NMI-federal issues.

■ Washington Rep., along with staff Herbert Yamada, collected $5,307.25 each for escorting Secretary Kempthorne's visit to NMI to discuss immigration and minimum wage with local leaders.

■ Change of command ceremony in Honolulu, Hawaii, then meeting with local leaders prior to House field hearings. Total per diem collected: $7,591.75

■ Two Washington Rep. staffers were paid per diems of $1,004.50 each to fly to Boise, Idaho to attend a Labor Day gathering.

■ Tenorio collected $ 5,479.00 in per diem to attend Office of Insular Affairs Business Conference and CNMI visit.

■ Tenorio collected $1,725.00 per diem to attend CNMI's 16th Legislature Inauguration and is still on island. "How much total per diem will the taxpayers pay him by the time he travels back to CNMI's office in Washington?" Cruz asked.

SOME

From Page 1

$200 lower than that of the CNMI governor, who earns $70,000 a year.

This is followed by legal counsel Kathryn Delafield with $65,000, and administration chief Grina Mizutani and operations chief Patrick Leon Guerrero, who received $64,600 apiece.

At CUC, supervisors and "specialists" make nearly as much, if not more, than many Cabinet members. Seven CUC employees made between $50,000 and $60,000. These employees include the deputy director, spokesperson, fiscal officer, personnel manager, and some "trades specialists." Their salaries are comparable to CNMI department heads, whose salaries are capped at $54,000 a year.

Furthermore, 27 other CUC employees made over $40,000 and below $50,000. These positions include managers, supervisors, accountants, an administrative officer, and an administrative support specialist.

Meanwhile, over 100 of CUC's nearly 300 employees receive less than $20,000 a year. The lowest salary given at CUC is $11,000 a year. They are seen to suffer the most significantly from the pay cut.

In a directive last month, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial subjected all CUC employees to a 10-percent salary cut effective immediately.

On top of the pay cut, nonessential employees had their work hours reduced by eight hours. Except for critical employees in the collections and payment department and operations department, all CUC employees must adhere to a 72-hour biweekly schedule. CUC will close all affected departments on non-payday Fridays.

The directive by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial came on the heels of his extension of the state of emergency at the utility agency.

Fitial noted that since the initial declaration last month, he has reprogrammed $5 million in local funds to CUC to pay for fuel delivery from Mobil.

"Continued reprogramming of funds threatens the Executive Branch's ability to pay its employees and continue operations. CUC must begin cost-cutting measures of its own to continue delivering utility services to the people of the CNMI," he said.

Step-by-step transfer of inmates to new prison

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

All inmates and detainees will slowly be transferred in the coming weeks from the old detention to the new state-of-the-art adult prison facility in Susupe, according to Department of Corrections Commissioner Lino Tenorio.

"We are moving them slowly in the next few weeks down the road as we are wrapping up our training with the staffing," Tenorio told *Saipan Tribune* during Saturday's ribbon cutting and blessing for the new correctional facility, officially called the Vicente Taman Seman Memorial Building.

Tenorio said they will be moving the prisoners and detainees to the new building "step by step" because they have been waiting for so long and that there's so many setbacks in the past.

The DOC commissioner said they want to do the transfer slowly rather than moving the inmates back again should anything go down in the new facility.

"[It's going to take] little by little in a few weeks," he said.

Tenorio said he could not exactly tell how many people will be moved to the new facility because they include immigration detainees that are kept overnight.

Also to be taken to the new building are DUI offenders (driving while under the influence of alcohol) and misdemeanor offenders who are just detained overnight.

At present DOC has 97 staff, including Tenorio, and three administrative personnel.

DOC is looking at 25 to 30 more Corrections cadets this year to meet the staffing requirements of the new facility pursuant to the consent decree.

The consent decree mandated the construction of the new adult prison facility following the U.S. Department of Justice's findings of deplorable conditions at the old detention building.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Miriam K. Seman, widow of Vicente Seman and son Arnold K. Seman lead the unveiling of Vicente Taman Seman's photo while Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Gov. Timothy H. Villagomez, Department of Corrections Commissioner Lino Tenorio, and other family members look on during Saturday's opening ceremony for the new correctional facility, called the Vicente Taman Seman Memorial Building.

Worker faces deportation for allegedly overstaying

The Division of Immigration has filed a deportation case against a commercial cleaner who allegedly has been overstaying in the CNMI for more than two years now.

Following the filing of the case, Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman ordered 36-year-old Roland B. Leo to appear in court on Feb. 21 at 1:30pm and explain why he should not be deported.

Immigration inspector Joseph R. Palacios stated in his report that Leo's nonresident worker's entry permit expired on Sept. 27, 2005.

Palacios said the respondent, a Filipino, does not have a pending Labor case and was never issued a temporary work authorization.

The inspector said Leo did not submit any nonresident worker's application at Labor for consensual transfer to work for another employer and did not file any application for renewal for his employment.

"Leo has failed to comply with the terms and conditions of his entry and is therefore a deportable alien pursuant to Commonwealth law and regulation," Palacios said.

Labor records show that Leo started work in the CNMI as a farmer in 1995. He became a commercial cleaner, security guard, then back to commercial cleaner. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Porky's Good Times Beach Bar
BEHIND MCDONALD'S GARAPAN, FACING THE BEACH
233-2444 • 287-0687
Porky's Open for Lunch & Dinner
MONDAY-SATURDAY
10AM TO 10PM

"Fishing for eyeballs"

That's what Henry must have been doing on that sunny Saturday morning at the reef, because that's what he caught. An eyeball. As he cast the fishing line, he hooked his daughter Natalie's left eye. Not good. Using advanced microsurgical techniques, Marianas Eye Institute's Dr. David Khorram performed the delicate surgery that removed the hook and saved Dominic's vision.

If we can handle a fishhook in little Natalie's eye, then surely we can help your kids when they need glasses.

Dr. David Khorram, MD
America's Top Ophthalmologists
Dr. Mark Robertson, OD
Magna Cum Laude

Marianas Eye Institute
"Where Technology Meets Talent"
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One-Hour Glasses • Contacts • Medical Eye Care
Advance Surgery & Laser • Botox
We accept: Aetna, Staywell, Moylan's, TakeCare, Medicaid, Calvos', and more.

Control on coin 'scams' proposed

By ERIC FREEDMAN
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

LANSING—Not all that glitters is gold, and not every shiny new coin is a wise investment—not even, say, a $5 Elvis Presley commemorative coin issued by the Marshall Islands.

But many unsophisticated coin investors and collectors don't understand that, according to a Macomb County lawmaker.

Rep. Steve Bieda, D-Warren, wants to extend the consumer protection law to companies and foreign governments that advertise coins as "legal tender" when those items aren't U.S. coins currently in circulation.

"If something is called a 'coin,' it has face value or denomination, and there's the assumption you can use it as money in the country of origin or redeem it at the exchange rate," Bieda said.

Bieda

"Sometimes you can't use them as money even in the entity that produced them," he said.

Bieda's new proposal would require mints, issuers or foreign governments to "clearly and conspicuously disclose" that such coins "cannot be exchanged or redeemed at face value for U.S. currency in the United States." That requirement wouldn't apply to advertising by coin dealers in the state.

Non-collectors and casual collectors are the most common purchasers, often enticed by the prospect of profit.

Lansing coin dealer Patrick Heller said people are disappointed when they come to his store to sell such items.

"In most instances, enough time has passed that they feel like, well, 'we didn't make such a sensible purchase but there's nothing we can do about it now,'" said Heller, president of Liberty Coin Service.

Wendell Wolka, a member of the American Numismatic Association board of governors, said the only way a coin will increase in worth is if the value of its metal rises or if it has collector value. His organization represents collectors and dealers.

"People should collect them because they like them, not because they expect to make a fortune," said Wolka, of Greenwood, Ind.

As an example of what he labels a "scam," Bieda cites the Marshall Islands, a now-independent former U.S. trust territory in the North Pacific Ocean with about 62.000 residents.

Its commemorative issues include $10 coins honoring the "heroes of D-Day," "heroes of the Philippines" and "heroes of Desert Storm" and $5 coins commemorating the space shuttle Discovery.

Bieda, a collector himself, said, "I've had a couple of pieces" from the Marshall Islands, adding, "Sometimes you like the design, but I recognize them for what they are."

Heller added, "The Marshall Island coins aren't even legal tender in the Marshall Islands."

Heller said another "violator" is the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. trust territory in the Pacific that uses U.S. currency. "It's technically part of the U.S. and doesn't have the authority to sponsor such an issue."

Among its coins are ones honoring scientist Albert Einstein, Pope Paul II and "endless love."

In 2004, a New York judge ordered an end to deceptive advertising for its so-called "Freedom Dollar" that carried the image of the former World Trade Center, the slogan "We Will Never Forget" and the coat of arms of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The private company that minted and marketed the coins with authorization from the Northern Mariana Islands government was assessed almost $370,000 in civil penalties in 2005 and refunded more than $2 million to defrauded consumers.

The advertising, telemarketing and sale of coins and similar items to collectors and investors periodically provoke complaints about deceptive business practices and fraud.

For example, last year the Federal Trade Commission investigated complaints that a national mail order firm failed to adequately disclose its practice of sending coins on approval to customers. The FTC took no formal action after the company revised its advertisements and other business practices.

Other cases have led to criminal convictions and partial restitution to cheated collectors.

Bieda's bill is awaiting action in the House Judiciary Committee.

Introducing
Bankohana Bonus Rate Savings Plus
Now, there's a whole new way for Bankohana customers to take their savings to an even higher altitude. Introducing Bankohana Bonus Rate Savings Plus. Each month, simply deposit a minimum of $100 and make no withdrawals, and you'll not only earn a regular interest rate, you'll get our highest bonus interest rate. Plus, sign up now and you'll receive a FREE[1] $20 DFS Galleria Gift Card.
Not a Bankohana customer? Then ask about our other Bonus Rate Savings accounts and ways to earn a DFS Galleria Gift Card. Better hurry to a Bank of Hawaii branch today, this offer flies away 2/17/08.[2]
GET A FREE DFS Galleria Gift Card.
$20 GALLERIA GIFT CARD
Bankohana Bonus Rate Savings Plus
Balance Amount | Regular Variable Rate APY† | Bonus* Variable Rate APY† | Combined* Variable Rate APY†
$100,000 and Over | 1.35% | 1.65% | 3.00%
$25,000 to $99,999 | 0.85% | 1.65% | 2.50%
$10,000 to $24,999 | 0.10% | 1.65% | 1.75%
Less than $10,000 | 0.05% | 1.65% | 1.70%
*The above bonus and combined rates are contingent upon making a minimum deposit of $100 with no withdrawals during the month. Fees may reduce earnings. Your Bankohana Bonus Rate Savings Plus account must be linked to a Bankohana Checking account.
Bank of Hawaii
[1] $5,000 minimum opening deposit and balance required for new Bankohana Bonus Rate Savings Plus accounts opened by February 17, 2008. Funds to open account may not be from an existing Bank of Hawaii account. Some restrictions apply. You will receive a $20 DFS Galleria Gift Card upon account opening. Limit one $20 DFS Galleria Gift Card per account regardless of the number of accountholders. Limit one per customer. Not available for existing accounts. Good while supplies last. † Current Annual Percentage Yields accurate as of 2/01/08 and subject to change without notice. Interest rates and APYs may change after the account is opened. Fees may reduce earnings. Some restrictions apply.
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Free comedy workshop set for budding standup comics

Have you thought about becoming a stand-up comedian? Do people tell you you're funny? Do people tell you you're not funny, but you want to be? Are you interested in writing comedy, or making a living through comedy? Then the Comedy Workshop is for you. This free course will start on Wednesday, Feb. 6, and will meet weekly for four weeks.

The course will feature instruction based on Judy Carter's famous LA Comedy Workshop.

Workshop organizer David Khorram explained, "A few weeks ago, a few friends gathered to explore the idea of putting together a stand-up comedy night. We realized that we needed some structure to help us move through the process of developing our acts, so we ordered Judy Carter's instructional DVD series, called 'Comedy Career in a Box.' It's a way to attend her Los Angeles Comedy Workshop, here on our remote island."

Judy Carter is the author of *The Comedy Bible* and *Standup Comedy*. She is a renowned comic, speaker and teacher. This unique DVD series takes you step-by-step through the creative process of joke writing and basic and advanced performance techniques.

The goal of the workshop is for each individual to ultimately develop 30 minutes of original comedy material. "Even if you don't want to perform comedy, but just want to add more humor to your life, to your writing, or to your talks, this is a good way of doing it," said Khorram. "Understanding comedy also helps you see more humor every day, and helps you appreciate the natural comedy around you. So, this comedy workshop isn't just for people that want to perform comedy. It's for anyone who wants to gain an appreciation for how comedy works."

For those interested in performing, the group has planned an evening of stand-up comedy toward the end of February.

Part 1 of the workshop is "Creating Killer Comedy Material." According to the course materials, you'll learn to use the same tools your favorite comedians use to write material from your own point of view. It covers how to jumpstart your creativity, fighting stage fright and other worries, joke writing made easy, finding your authentic material, and getting big laughs.

Part 2 focuses on "How Not to Bomb." In this section you develop your material further and concentrate on performance. You'll learn secrets to dealing with hecklers, avoiding hack material, the top five mistakes comics make, insider secrets of successful rewrites, how to make the audience love you in five seconds, and building a set that kills.

For those interested in making money, Part 3 is on "Making Money from Being Funny." It shares secrets from managers, agents, executive producers, casting directors and club bookers on how to get noticed. It features interviews with 18 Hollywood heavy hitters.

The Comedy Workshop will begin on Wednesday, Feb. 6 at 6:30pm at Marianas Eye Institute on Beach Road Garapan. If you're interested, contact Khorram at 235-9090, or by email at davidkhorram@gmail.com. There is no charge for the Comedy Workshop. Space is limited. ***(PR)***

MCS graduate earns a place on president's list

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Castro

Hiralynn P. Castro, a 2007 high school graduate of Mount Carmel School, earned a place on the president's list for fall term at Portland Community College.

The president's list, according to campus president Dr. Algie Gatewood, is the highest academic honor a student can earn at Portland Community College.

"We know earning outstanding grades requires hard work, a commitment to attending class and maintaining the highest academic standards," Gatewood stated in an email to Castro.

Gatewood added that the officials of PCC also know there are competing demands for Castro's time, but she was able to make her studies a high priority.

"We are very proud of your [Castro] accomplishment, and we are sure you are as well," Gatewood stated.

Castro was raised by her grandparents George and Lydia Palacios.

According to Castro's mother, Jenn Palacios, "We are all very proud of her. She is the first grandchild to go away to college and she is doing very well."

Castro is taking classes in accounting and plans to come back to Saipan during the summer break.

"PCC recognizes academic excellence for students who have earned a 3.25 or higher GPA [grade point average] in a given term on a minimum of six graded credits, excluding PASS/No PASS grades," Gatewood stated.

She added that PCC recognizes its students by placing them on the honors, dean's, or president's list and noting the award on college transcripts.

PTI offers free cable locator service

PTI would like to remind all contractors, homeowners, and building owners the importance of contacting PTI prior to any type of digging.

PTI plant technical service manager Velma Palacios said, "we have been experiencing a large number of unnecessary cable cuts and many close calls to our fiber lines. Many times these cable cuts result in costly damage or service interruptions."

If there are any cuts to the cable, violators will be charged per P.L. 9-4, The Commonwealth Utility Damage Prevention Act of 1994.

"In addition to the cost of repair, this causes an inconvenience to the customers who are out of service," Palacios added.

PTI cables are not the only underground utilities (water, power, and sewer) and those services might also be jeopardized if they are unintentionally cut.

Unlike other telecommunication companies, PTI currently does not charge a fee for cable location that occurs during regular business hours. For your convenience, PTI is open from Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm.

For more information or to request a cable locate, contact PTI's Customer Care at 682-4PTI (4784) or see cable locate information in the 2008 CNMI Phone Book, which is available free of charge at PTI Customer Service on Middle Road. ***(PTI)***

Ristorante Italiano
CAPRICCIOSA
WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 6, 2008
4th Anniversary special
One complimentary FREE mug of Miller Lite Draft or one glass of Pepsi per any Large Size of Spaghetti.
PEPSI
Miller Lite
Opens at 11:00 am - 10:30 pm Comete Center 1F, Garapan, next to Tony Roma's

TONY ROMA'S
RIBS · SEAFOOD · STEAKS
WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 6, 2008
4th Anniversary special
One complimentary FREE mug of Miller Lite Draft or one glass of Pepsi per any Combo meal of Ribs.
PEPSI
Miller Lite
1st floor, Comete Center, Garapan • Tel. 233-9193 or 233-9195
Open from 11:00 am to 10:30 pm

Laser and Eye Surgery Center of Saipan
Hardt Eye Clinic

Samuel C. Lo, O.D., M.D.

Dr. Lo received his ophthalmology training at the world renowned New York Eye and Ear Infirmary and followed by a retina fellowship at the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York. He specializes in the treatment of retinal disease including Diabetic eye disease, Macular degeneration, Retinal detachment, Cataract and Glaucoma. Dr. Lo returns to Saipan to offer "**Advanced Eye Care**" to the people of Saipan.

Dr. Lo will be in Saipan beginning February 18, 2008 for one week. Medicare, Medicaid and most insurance are accepted.

Appointments can be made by calling Hardt Eye Clinic (670) 235-2030, the Laser and Eye Surgery Center (808) 949-2000 or by email at drsamuello@yahoo.com.

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

Looking back at the Mariana Islands the past 62 years

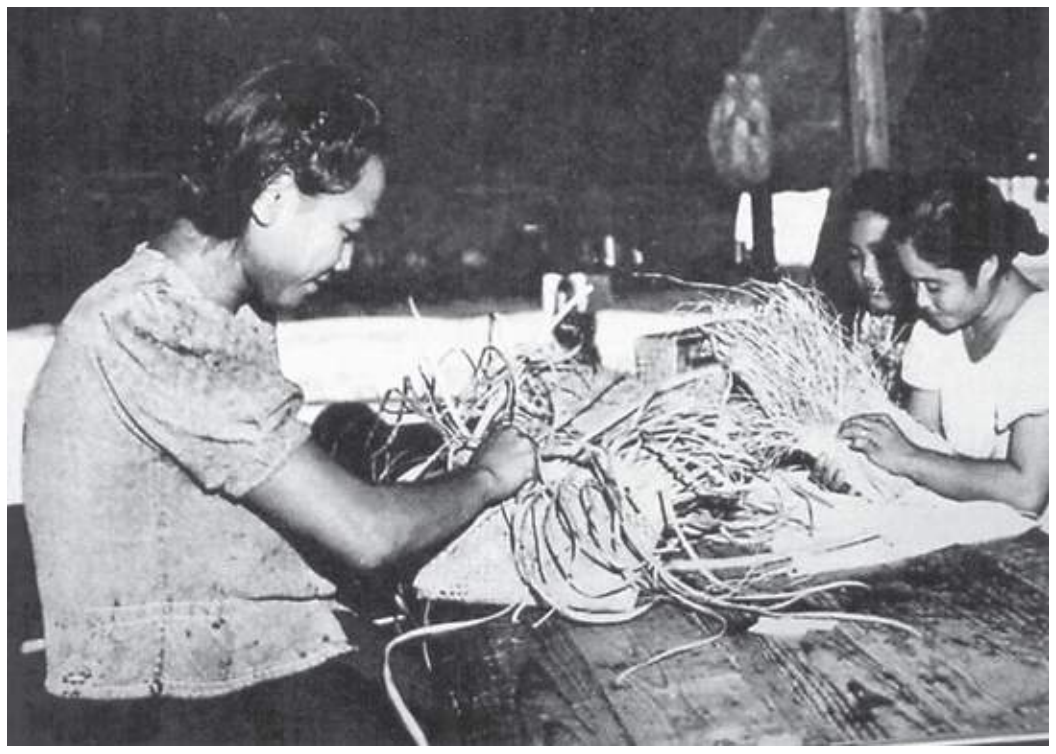

PHOTO BY DMS

Juan Naputi, left, Inez Tenorio, right, and an unidentified local woman are show here weaving hand bags made of pandanus leaves.

USDOE's Booker commends PSS

The Public School System recently was commended by Jamila Booker of the United States Department of Education for the focus on high student achievement, highly qualified teachers and excellent annual audits.

Booker met with the Board of Education, commissioner David Borja, and his leadership team and later with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial during her brief visit to the PSS.

Booker explained, during a meeting with the Board of Education, that she is part of a five USDOE member team conducting a one week review of the Guam PSS and also visiting the PSS. Booker stated most of the USDOE team's time is dedicated to Guam PSS because of the many issues they have. She added that the USDOE has no outstanding issues with the CNMI PSS and that is why the visit is short.

The PSS presented a series of power points that showed the continued upward trend in student achievement as measured on the annual Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10) and the latest data on highly qualified teachers. Booker praised the PSS for the excellent data that shows the academic achievement, by each of our schools and the system as a whole. She also commended PSS for its fidelity to meeting the highly qualified teacher (HQT) challenge. She added that the USDOE is suggesting to the Guam PSS to meet with the CNMI PSS on the HQT effort and on student achievement.

Booker, during a meeting with the governor, commended the PSS for the excellent annual audits and told Fitial that he can be proud of the accomplishments of the PSS. Booker noted that the PSS audits had no education findings and no other state or territory has achieved this. The governor thanked her and for the support that USDOE provides to the PSS. Fitial then explained that this is a very difficult year financially for the CNMI. He added that PSS is considered an essential agency and that he will exempt it from budget cuts.

The BOE members and Booker thanked the governor for the meeting and for his support for public education in the CNMI. ***(PR)***

My Wave Club
Hopwood Jr. High School

Raffle Drawing was on Saturday, January 26, 2008
Thank you to all our supporters!

Prizes		Donators	Winners	Ticket #
1.	1. Grand Prize: $500.00	MY WAVE CLUB of Hopwood Jr. High School	Ella M. Vitug	13564
2.	Baby Grand Prize: $250.00	MY WAVE CLUB of Hopwood Jr. High School	Frances Borja	6791
3.	One Complimentary 1 Night Stay	Hyatt Regency, Saipan	Genevieve Gottwald	7377
4.	One Complimentary 1 Night Stay	Saipan Grand Hotel	Maria Camacho	5222
5.	One Digital Camera	Ms. Lori Manglona and Frankie Boy Angel	Flor Taylor	6462
6.	One 2 Days Midsize Car Rental	Budget Car Rental	Gener Lorete	8776
7.	One DVD Player	Mr./Mrs. John & Cindy Attao	Dong Del Rosario	3504
8.	$100.00 Cash	JET Holdings & Company/Juan S. Tenorio	Matilda Rosario	3341
9.	One 1 Day Midsize Car Rental	Budget Car Rental	Edoy	13046
10.	One Young Female Pig	Mr. Vicente Manglona	Doris Cepeda	8827
11.	One 2 pc Crystal Glass	Mr./Ms. Freddy Salavaria & Dorina Castro	Michael Lampha	1824
12.	One $50 Gift Certificate	Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods	Mary Salas	5409
13.	One $50 Gift Certificate to Café at the Park	Mr./Mrs. Gabe & Pat Boyer	Abong Camacho	6993
14.	One $50 Gift Certificate to J.C. Tenorio Ent.	Saipan Stevedore	Jurysa Suzuki	1704
15.	One $50 Gift Certificate to J.C. Tenorio Ent.	Saipan Stevedore	K.P. Tagabuel	11775
16.	One 3 pc Set Cooler	Mr./Mrs. Julian & Brenda Manglona	Mathew C. Igitol	4332
17.	One Buffet Lunch for 2	Mai Restaurant: Fiesta Resort & Spa, Saipan	Esper U. Palacios	11459
18.	One Buffet Lunch for 2	Mai Restaurant: Fiesta Resort & Spa, Saipan	Angie Quinata	589
19.	One Water Park Passes for 2	Pacific Islands Club	J. Stump	16797
20.	Four 1 Hour Gift Certificate to MegaZone	Megabyte	Christina Lizama	17624
21.	One $30 Gift Certificate	Tony Roma's: Ribs.Seafood.Steaks	Craig Hart	8047
22.	One $30 Gift Certificate	Capricciosa	Ka Barcinas	11901
23.	One Two T-Shirts by Wear-A-Marconi	Admaran & Company	Manahane	16968
24.	One $25 Gift Certificate to J.C. Tenorio Ent.	Saipan Shipping Company, Inc.	Trina T. Quan	12232
25.	One $25 Gift Certificate	National Office Supply	Sid T. Quan	12257
26.	One $25 Gift Certificate	National Office Supply	C. Brett	3391
27.	One 3-Slot Toaster	Mr./Mrs. Julian & Cheryl Salalila	Craig Hart	8133
28.	One Household/Medicine Kit	Ms./Mr. Margie & Edu S. Banaag	Marie Borlongon	9690
29.	Four Movie Gift Certificates/Passes	Hollywood Theatres	Archie Rosario	3058
30.	Four Movie Gift Certificates/Passes	Hollywood Theatres	Monica M.	16407
31.	One Sack of Rice	Mrs. Susana C. Paras	Natasha Palacios	11550
32.	One Sack of Rice	Mr./Mrs. Joe & Mary Salas	Arvin C. Mettao	15321
33.	One Cs of Spare Ribs	Mr./Mrs. John & Andie Dela Cruz	Craig Hart	8353
34.	One Cs of Soft Drinks	Ms. Mercedes & Alexis P. Cabrera	Emily K. Palacios	3806
35.	Extra Prize 1: Water Park Passes for 2	Pacific Islands Club	Rachel Renee Cabrera	4736
36.	Extra Prize 2: $20 Gift Certificate to Bestseller	Ms. Dennis Villagomez & Ms. Lynette Villagomez	Michael Umali	12733

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 04, 2002

Outbound passengers to pay additional fee
All outbound passengers originating from the United States and its territories, as well as those travelling domestically, started coughing up an additional $2.50 for their airline tickets, after the US government ordered the implementation of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. The new law, which was passed and implemented after the September 11 tragedies, mandate all carriers flying the United States air space to finance the operation of civil aviation security services.

Saipan senators rush to protect poker fees
Although he is willing to work with the Babauta administration on some of its agenda, Sen. Thomas P. Villagomez said he would oppose any moves to compromise the local collections arising from the poker license fees. To boost this position, Villagomez said all three senators of the Saipan senatorial district-Sen. Pete P. Reyes and Sen. Ramon S. Guerrero and himself-have come out with a statement, saying that they are not ready to support any moves by the administration to tap into the local poker machine collections.

DEQ boat capsizes near Mañagaha
Rescuers responded to a sea crisis Thursday east of Mañagaha, where a 21-foot Division of Environmental Quality boat had capsized. There were no reported injuries. All individuals aboard the vessel were transported safely to land. The police department's Boating Safety Unit later on recovered the capsized vessel.

February 04, 2003

NMI leaders 'saddened' by shuttle tragedy
The Commonwealth's leaders expressed sympathy yesterday for the loss sustained by families and friends in the Columbia shuttle tragedy, particularly in the case of one of the astronauts, William McCool, who had ties with some families in the Marianas. A statement from the Office of the Governor said that Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente reacted with profound sympathy and great loss for the families and friends of the seven astronauts who perished as the Columbia was reentering the Earth last Sunday morning local time.

CUC-AGP issue drags prominent names
A number of politicians knew about the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation's dealings with a Manila-based company, Aluminates Group Philippines, as some of them had been part of sponsored tours to Manila and Australia. The AGP, a subsidiary of Melbourne-based Aluminates Group, and the CUC are now in standoff following the utility firm's refusal to fully pay the company.

FEMA cites 'govt to govt' protocol
Amid reports that nonresident workers affected by Supertyphoon Pongsona on Rota are being excluded from U.S. disaster assistance, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said that it would review eligibility requirements for its programs if the CNMI government requests for it. As of yesterday, however, the CNMI government has not made any official request to include nonresidents in the disaster aid, according to Ed Conley, FEMA's lead external affairs officer for the Pongsona disaster recovery.

February 04, 2004

Cost of Japan confab haunts govt
The Babauta administration is still in debt amounting to $65,000 for hosting a business conference in Tokyo, Japan last October. This prompted Gov. Juan N. Babauta to ask other government agencies to double their contribution to settle the amount.

Telesource: Tax lien filing a DoF mistake
Telesource CNMI, Inc., the contractor involved in the construction of the multi-million-dollar Saipan prison facility, yesterday decried the mistake committed by the CNMI Department of Finance in notifying the federal court last week of a $600,000-tax lien against the company. Telesource president and chief executive officer K.J. Semikian said the Finance Department committed a mistake in filing the notice of tax lien.

Pacific

Temaru cabinet resigns over conviction in Tahiti

PAPEETE, Tahiti (Tahitipresse)—All 15 remaining cabinet ministers in the government of French Polynesia President Oscar Temaru resigned en masse Wednesday in support of one minister who resigned earlier in the day after his court conviction Tuesday.

Gilles Tefaatau resigned Wednesday morning as minister of small and medium businesses and industry. A Papeete criminal court convicted him of a conflict of interest dating back to a period from August to December 2005.

The judge fined Tefaatau 500,000 French Pacific francs (US$6,329/€4,190), but rejected the prosecutor's recommendation that he be declared ineligible to hold public office for two years.

Tefaatau announced Wednesday he would appeal the court decision, saying he did not profit personally from the case, either directly or indirectly.

Temaru, surrounded by his ministers, held a press conference late Wednesday afternoon to announce his government's resignations, but said he intends to form a new government "within a few days". Under the autonomy statue, he has five days to form what would be his fourth government since the previous general election in May 2004.

The resignations occurred three days after the first round of a general election for the 57 French Polynesia Assembly representatives and 11 days before the scheduled Feb. 10 second round. The resignations are not expected to affect the timing of the second round.

Tefaatau is N° 41 on Temaru's list of candidates and backups for the 37 French Polynesia Assembly seats representing the Windward Islands of Tahiti, Moorea and Maiao.

Former French Polynesia President Gaston Tong Sang, who scored a big upset over Temaru in Sunday's first round of voting, had nothing but harsh criticism for the pro-independence party leader on Wednesday.

Tong Sang issued a media communiqué accusing the Temaru government of being unable to adopt a budget and of illegally using the presidential plane for election campaign trips.

The resignation of the Temaru government ministers is "the last trick of a team that has shown its incompetence throughout" its term, Tong Sang charged.

During a radio interview Wednesday, Jean-Christophe Bouissou, the leader of a small party in Tong Sang's six-party coalition, said the Temaru government's resignation en masse meant they were abandoning a sinking ship. Bouissou is N° 3 on Tong Sang's list of candidates for the Windward Islands.

Emphasizing their values of "honesty" and integrity", the 15 other Temaru government ministers denounced what they described as Tefaatau's "unexpected conviction", suggesting that the French state may have had a role to play.

The resignations provided Temaru with another occasion to criticize the French state in general and French Overseas State Secretary Christian Estrosi in particular.

Temaru singled out Estrosi's telephone call Monday to Nicole Bouteau, during which the junior minister reportedly encouraged her to form an alliance with Tong Sang. However, Ms. Bouteau decided not to form any alliance. (See earlier article: "Tahiti's voters face historic Round 2 of voting on Feb. 10, possible Round 3 on Feb. 21.")

F-15 crashes off Hawaii, injuring pilot

HONOLULU (AP)—A fighter jet among a troubled fleet of F-15s that recently returned to the skies plunged into the ocean, but the pilot ejected in time and was rescued shortly afterward.

A Coast Guard helicopter plucked the Hawaii National Guard pilot from the ocean Friday. He was taken to a hospital and was listed in good condition.

The pilot had extensive flight experience, said Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee, the Hawaii National Guard commander.

"Our first concern was whether the pilot was OK," he said. "I got the chance to visit with him in the hospital. He's terrific."

The cause of Friday's crash was being investigated.

The crash comes just a few weeks after the Hawaii Air National Guard resumed flying the jet. The Air Force, and the Hawaii Guard, put most F-15s back in the air by January after inspections.

The fleet's grounding came after a model broke in two during a training flight over Missouri, injuring the pilot. An investigation concluded that a defective aluminum beam in the frame cracked.

Another probe found that more than 150 of the military's F-15s also had the flawed beams.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

3rd NOTICE OF SALE
UNDER POWER OF SALE
IN DEED OF TRUST

Edward M. Ayuyu, ("Trustor"), on or about September 17, 2001 gave and delivered to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, ("Trustee"), acting on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs, United States of America, ("VA"), a Deed of Trust upon certain real property hereinafter described, which Deed of Trust was recorded on September 17, 2001 under Document No. 01-1942 to secure payment of a Promissory Note of the Trustor to the Trustee, acting on behalf of the VA.

The Deed of Trust and this Notice of Sale affect the property hereafter described:

LOT NO. 345 R 426, CONTAINING AN AREA OF 929 SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED ON DRAWING/CADASTRAL PLAT NO. 345 R 09 DATED SEPTEMBER 25, 1984, COMMONWEALTH RECORDER'S FILE NO. 84-2049, THE DESCRIPTION THEREIN BEING INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE.

The Trustor has defaulted on payment of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust, and by reason of said default Trustee issued its Notice of Default on July 20, 2006. Thirty days have passed since the default notice was served on Trustor and said default has not been cured.

Pursuant to 2CMC §4622(b)(2), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, Trustee will, on **February 11, 2008 at 10:00 a.m., at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation's Rota Field Office, Sonton, P.O. Box 527, Rota, MP 96951** under power of sale contained in the Deed of Trust, sell the above described parcel of real property at public auction to the highest qualified bidder, to satisfy the obligations secured by said Deed of Trust. The minimum bid offer shall be not less than $36,688.00, the total amount due under the VA loan plus Trustee's expenses.

The sale shall be without warranty as to the title or interest to be conveyed or as to the property of the Deed of Trust, other than that the Trustee is the lawful holder of such Deed of Trust. The purchase price shall be payable by cash, certified check or cashier's check and shall be paid within 72 hours from time of sale.

Trustee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to cancel or extend the date, time and place for sale of such property. Any prospective buyer must be a person authorized by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to hold title to real property in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

DATED this 9th day of January, 2008.

/S/Joshua T. Sasamoto
Corporate Director, NMHC

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairman of the Board, is hereby giving notice that a Regular Meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday, February 7, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. at the NMHC Conference Room in Garapan, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

I. **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
  A. Call to Order
  B. Roll Call
II. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
III. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**
  A. December 12, 2007 – Regular Board Meeting
IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
V. **HOUSING PROGRAMS**
  A. Status of Section 8 and Housing Choice Voucher Programs
  B. Training – 2007 Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP)
VI. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**
  A. Status of CDBG Projects
  B. Timeliness Updates
VII. **MORTGAGE CREDIT PROGRAMS**
  A. Amended Loan Guaranty Modification
VIII. **FIELD OFFICE REPORTS**
IX. **FISCAL AFFAIRS**
  A. VA Contingent Liability
  B. NMHC/MPLT Home Loan Program
  C. FY 2006 Audit
X. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
XI. **OTHER MATTERS**
XII. **ADJOURNMENT**

NOTE: Pursuant to PL 8-41, Section 13(6) and (7), some discussion of the above may be under Executive Session.

/s/ **MANUEL A. SABLAN**
Chairman of the Board

Northern Marianas College
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 • Tel: (670) 234-5498
Fax: (670) 234-1270 • Web site: www.nmcnet.edu

Regular Meeting of the Board of Regents
Board of Regents Conference room,
NMC - Saipan Campus
Thursday, February 07, 2008
3:30pm

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
  a. Roll Call
  b. Review & Adoption of Agenda
  c. Review & Adoption of Minutes
    i. September 24, 2007 – Regular Meeting
II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
III. **REPORTS**
  a. BOR Standing Committees
  b. President
  c. Faculty Senate
  d. Staff Senate
  e. Associated Students of NMC
  f. CFAO Financial Report
IV. **OLD BUSINESS**
  a. CNMI Scholarship Office Transfer
  b. Procurement Policies
  c. Proposed HR Policies
V. **NEW BUSINESS**
  a. NMC Credit Write-Offs
  b. Investment
  c. Election of Vice-Chair
  d. Regular BOR Meeting Schedule
  e. BOR Self Evaluation
VI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

/s/ Charles V. Cepeda
Acting Chairperson, BOR
February 07, 2008

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
Office of the Secretary
Caller Box 10007
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Department of Community Cultural Affairs is pleased to inform all childcare providers, all government agencies and the general public that the Childcare Program is still on-going. DCCA is now the lead agency for the Child Care Development Program. The following contacts are provided for everyone's information:

Contact Person: **Melvin L.O. Faisao, Acting Secretary**
Linda C. Torres, Acting Program Manager

Office Location: **Bldg. No. 1341 Ascension CT, Capitol Hill**

Contact Numbers: **Tel. 664-2576/ 2574**
Fax: 664-2570

E-mail: faisaom_dcca.deputysecretary@pticom.com

Program Information: **New Registration: (To Be Announced)**

** If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the above person at the above numbers. The Public School System no longer administers the program and any inquiries will be forwarded to the DCCA Childcare Program Section.

/s/ Melvin LO Faisao

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 • Fax: (670) 234-7144 or 235-7147
Email: administration@cda.gov.mp • Website: www.cda.gov.mp

PUBLIC NOTICE
February 3, 2008

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CDA) THRU ITS ACTING CHAIRMAN HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE CDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD ITS REGULAR MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2008 AT 10:00 A.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CDA CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, WAKIN'S BUILDING, CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
  1. Roll Call
  2. Adoption of Agenda
  3. Adoption of Minutes- January 9, 2008
II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
III. **REPORTS**
  1. Financial Report – CDA
IV. **DIVISIONS/COMMITTEES**
  1. Development Corporation Division (DCD)
    a. Foreclosed Properties - Update
  2. DBD/Public Finance Committee
    a. Status of the DBD Funds
  3. Administrative Matters/Personnel & Budget Committee
    a. Administration's Report
    b. Executive Director
  4. QC Program/Economic Development Activities Committee
    a. Compliance Issues
V. **OLD BUSINESS**
  1. Sunset Villa
  2. Pacific Gardenia Hotel
  3. Sablan Enterprises
  4. Saipan Health Corporation (SHC)
  5. Membership-ADFIAP
VI. **NEW BUSINESS**
VII. **OTHER MATTERS**
VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. (Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session)

/s/ PEDRO I. ITIBUS
Acting Chairman, CDA Board of Directors

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 37

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John Pangelinan PUBLISHER
Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Political stimulus

There are two ways to look at the package of tax and spending measures that emerged last week from Chairman Max Baucus's Senate Finance Committee: as an economic stimulus plan for the country or as a political stimulus plan for the Democratic Party. As the latter, it was arguably superior to the bipartisan agreement hammered out between President Bush and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. That plan was based on $100 billion worth of tax rebates to individuals and families, plus about half that much in investment tax breaks for business. Pelosi gave up increased unemployment benefits and food stamps and, in return, the White House agreed to focus more of the rebates on lower- and middle-income people. By contrast, the Senate Finance Committee plan would have shrunk the rebates slightly and spread them out among not only wage-earners but also about 20 million Social Security recipients and 250,000 disabled veterans. This made the package more expensive than the House plan—and put Republican senators, including several up for reelection this year, in the position of voting vote against the elderly and those who have served in uniform.

We write of this plan in the past tense, however, because Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and the White House seem to have held onto enough Republicans to deny it the 60 votes needed to move to an up-or-down vote. Still, considered on its economic merits, the Finance Committee bill is better than the Bush-Pelosi plan in one important respect: It would have extended unemployment insurance by an additional 13 weeks. This would put cash in the hands of likely spenders much more quickly than the rebates would. A temporary increase in food stamps, potentially more stimulative than a Social Security boost, was not part of the Finance Committee bill.

Democrats now say they will have to try to change the House bill on the Senate floor, starting when Sens. Barack Obama, D-Ill., and Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., come back from the campaign trail after Super Tuesday. Though food stamps and extended unemployment benefits would enhance the impact of a final package, one amendment Democrats apparently want to push to a vote—an increase in home heating assistance—would not. But it does create a difficult vote for northern Republicans who face reelection.

As the Senate deliberated, the government announced that unemployment declined from 5.0 percent in December to 4.9 percent in January, even though the economy lost 17,000 jobs. The mixed report, following an earlier one that showed growth of about half a percentage point in gross domestic product in the final quarter of 2007, suggests that the economy is slowing but that, if a serious recession is coming, we're not in it yet. That fact can also be looked at two ways: It could show that the case for a stimulus package is overblown. Or it could show that there is still time for Congress to enact a stimulus package while the measure can do some good.

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WE'RE FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND WE'RE HERE TO HELP...
ISN'T THAT ONE OF THE "THREE BIGGEST LIES" ?
ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN
THE CHECK IS IN THE MAIL!
WOW! TWO FOR TWO!
THIRD ONE COMING UP NOV. 4...
REBATES
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The need for a vocational school

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Joe and Mike just graduated from a vocational training school. Joe will be opening up a shop to do electrical repairs in homes and businesses. Mike has been hired by one of the hotels to train as a pastry chef. Sally and Rita have also just completed their basic training. Sally will be working in the hospitality industry as a public relations manager for a large tour agent. And Rita is opening up a beauty shop as head beautician with her mother as manager. Wouldn't that be a great scenario for the youth of the CNMI? But alas there is NO vocational school in Saipan. There is no place for the youth to learn a trade.

Okay, then let's create one with little or no money down. Here's the plan. First, we form a group of truly motivated individuals from the private sector and a few from the public sector. No, we are not going to start with search for money from the government. We already know the answer so let's not waste time or our breath. No money from them! Period!

Next we lay out a solid plan showing step-by-step what we intend to do including the types of vocational training the center will do. The plan will involve input from various businesses such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club and other interested parties. This plan will map out the various steps needed to reach our goal. Also everyone involved will know his role. It will also include steps to measure for success. If we plan wisely, it cannot fail.

Since we are going to need a large building and ground area, we will approach the Department of Public Land requesting to lease a large vacated garment factory. These buildings are lying idle and untended slowly deteriorating. Splendid, we now have a great facility with little or no rent depending on how we negotiate.

Let us decide some of the trades we need in the CNMI. We need plumbers, electricians, painters, electronic mechanics, auto mechanics, barbers, beauticians, chefs, hospitality trained personnel, small business entrepreneurs, carpenters, computer programmers, printers, contractors, and the list grows as the need arises. This is only a tentative list to be decided as we progress with our project.

We need instructors who are proficient in the respective trades. Let's go visit some of the leading companies who have the proper personnel and ask for help. Hey, Joeten Motors and Micrel promised to allow several of their top people instruct the students. One of my friends, an owner of a fine and busy electrical firm, has promised to give us his time for training interested youth and even take on an interested youth as a trainee. After speaking with several of the hotels, several chefs offered to train people also. Others are willing and waiting to pitch in.

Oh, I forgot we need students. The targeted students will be those who have graduated from high school but are not headed for college. We will also appeal to people on food stamps to learn a trade and regain their proud in being able to help themselves. With the help of parents, friends, the students will be found with a desire to learn a trade. It would be great if each Legislator would search in his own precinct and recommend four or five students. Great collaborative effort!

So far we have arranged for the following: a building and grounds, instructors, students, several trades needed. Wow, no money has been spent so far. Oh, yes we need several computers for academic training. I bet we can find them lying in corners in various government agencies unused or individuals will donate them. They need not be new, only functional.

Let's move in and begin. All the students will help in cleaning the building and maintaining the grounds themselves. Some will do painting and some will do housecleaning as needed. This is their campus and they will be responsible for maintaining it. We will have only one caretaker who will look after general matters.

This vocational training school will be divided into two parts: the hands-on skill training and the academic training. Students will be required to seek employment in the fields they are interested. The school will assist in finding a job. For example, a student interested in plumbing will work for a contractor as a plumber's trainee at whatever wage is offered. If it is $3.55 an hour, okay. These are learning and working experiences.

In this manner each student will work as a trainee in whatever trade he is interested in. In the evenings and on Saturdays, each student will attend academic courses which will help him master his trade better. He will be motivated to improve his reading, writing and math abilities and other necessary mental training. A skilled tradesman must know more than hands-on skill if he is to stand out in his trade.

The school is not free to the students. Those who find a job will pay from their earnings. Students unable to pay will be granted loans until they graduate and begin earning money. There is no free lunch in life. One must earn his keep.

The school will be non-profit. It will solicit only the money it needs to operate. For some of its funds the school will appeal to various institutions for donations to help fund the vocational training school. Most of the instructors will be donating their skills and time. We will hire a competent person to operate the school. He will be paid from tuitions and donations. Perhaps we can approach the Workforce Investment Agency to help out.

Oh, I forgot there are grants available for this type of vocational school. This is free money from the United States. Let's write a few grants and cross our fingers. See no money needed from our already depleted treasury.

Where's the catch, you ask? If it's so easy why hasn't anybody done it before? My friend, there is no catch, no false promises, no requesting for phantom money. The reason no one hasn't done it before because everyone is waiting for the government to do it. There are secrets to success that work unless we work.

See THE NEED on Page 11

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Race does matter; so does hope

By MARJORIE VALBRUN
Special to the Washington Post

Marjorie Valbrun, a journalist, lives in Washington.

Let's be honest. Race does matter. Everyone knows it. Yes, in a perfect world it wouldn't matter, but ours is far from perfect, and the current American political climate is even more so.

Nevertheless, the recent images of college students, most of them white, chanting "Race doesn't matter" at Barack Obama campaign rallies have been heartwarming. The young people have embraced this mantra and buoyed their candidate's vote tallies in the primaries with earnest and youthful idealism. By doing so, they've signaled that they are looking beyond race and choosing a standard-bearer who can redefine and realign the country's political-racial landscape.

Admirable? Yes. Impressive? Absolutely. Moving? How could it not be? Racially transcendent? Not a chance.

These students have come of age at a time when American race relations are not the nuclear subject they were for their parents' generation. They have less rigid ideas about race and tend to have a more diverse collection of friends. They live at a time when the concept of biracial or multiracial identities is familiar. Caroline Kennedy said her three teenage children influenced her decision to endorse Barack Obama.

This is indeed an incredible moment, for young people and the nation. Yet many Americans of all stripes are struggling between buying into the notion that race is irrelevant and wanting to reject that notion outright. It's not really one of those well-on-the-one-hand-but-on-the-other-hand kinds of debates. This is America, after all. We have some serious racial baggage. We have a hard time reconciling ourselves to the past and sometimes behave as if it has no bearing on the future.

Now some people want to look to one solitary black man to just erase the so-called race problem. Only in a country of eternal optimists and perpetual revisionists could such contradictions coexist. Call it the I-Love-Obama-thus-racism-no-longer-exists phenomenon. If only things were that simple.

Race matters in almost everything we do. It factors into where we choose to live, school our children and pray. It determines whom we hire — or don't hire. It influences how we are viewed by police and treated by the criminal justice system. It grants some people access to better health care and denies others a high-quality public school education. Race mattered during Hurricane Katrina and during the O.J. Simpson trials. It mattered in Jena, La. It mattered to Rodney King, Abner Louima, Amadou Diallo and countless other black men. It matters in whom we choose to love or hate, to honor or discredit, to revere or demonize. We make decisions based on race all the time, whether consciously or not, and we do so in ways both big and small.

Still, we owe ourselves some credit for the current efforts to deal with our race issues. Media coverage of race in the campaign has been heavy to the point of being ridiculous, but it has also prompted many Americans — at least those outside the media-political bubble of Washington — to have more honest conversations about race among themselves and with themselves. This can't be bad.

Nor is it bad that thousands of black voters turned out for Obama in the South Carolina Democratic primary. No doubt they find him inspiring — and qualified. And, too, they probably like it that he's black. There's a feeling of kinship there. That's not racist; it's honest.

Were the large number of white men who voted for John Edwards in South Carolina also voting against Obama? Maybe. Did they judge Edwards to be best qualified and give him extra points for being white? Maybe. These are slippery-slope questions. Determining when support for one person over another crosses the line from honest differences to racist considerations is a tough call.

The "Race doesn't matter" crowd would probably disagree. When they chant it, they mean it. They don't qualify it with nuance. It would be more accurate, however, if they simply added "to me" at the end of the phrase: "Race doesn't matter to me."

It's a profound sentiment that meets head-on the question of why race should matter at all. In principle it should not, and that's why the young people who don't believe it matters are so admirable. Imagine their mantra sweeping the country on Super Tuesday and riding a wave until Election Day.

But neither their collective energy nor a million continuous chants could make their mantra true. Their candidate is neither "post-racial" nor "race neutral" or "colorless." He has not transcended race: The matter of whether such a thing is even possible is a question for another day. He is just an extraordinary black man, but a black man nonetheless, who happens to be running for president. The young, white people who support him happen to love him regardless of his race, much as many black people love him because of it.

The idealism of young people should not be underrated. They have a lot to teach us cynics, and they give us plenty of reason to hope. "Hope" for them is not a political prop; they seem to be plumbing its deeper meaning. For them in particular, Obama seems to have made hope cool and exquisitely tangible. That's why, instead of "Race doesn't matter," they should adopt "Hope matters" as their mantra. It implies a collective wish for a turning point in this country, a time when we resolve to accept, not pretend to erase, our inherent racial biases and look beyond them to find each other's humanity.

Maybe now is that time.

We can only hope.

Letters to the Editor

Solutions to lingering problems at CUC

The conversation on every table for the last couple of years is the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation. Rates, rates, rates, and so on.

Now the administration is urging the Legislature to repeal public law 15-94, because CUC's revenue shortfall cannot meet its fuel cost, and the general fund is unable to continue subsidizing fuel delivery for CUC.

First, CUC will never meet its fuel cost, why? Saipan power generation is probably producing approximately less than 40 percent of its load capacity today, due to its way overdue preventive maintenance on all of its units and some of its units are in very serious major conditions.

As I understand, No. 8 and No. 7 13mw units continue to develop damage "foundation bolts" and serious foundation cracks. No. 7 unit aside from several foundation bolts damage, also has a "burnt" generator-end that will take several months to repair.

Unless the "root causes of the severe vibration is found," no repair work, will ever work!

CUC has already lost several "hundred thousands dollars of taxpapers money" for an earlier repair of the same fault and another contractor again is hired to do the same work repair that will cost close to "half a million" dollars to the taxpayer, and, most of this money is from the federal government.

I wonder if they know how their grants are being used, for a broken foundation bolts repair that will not work!

I am also wondering what happen to those "highly paid consultants" from the Philippines and elsewhere?

Power plant 1 at Lower Base has eight units. Four of them are 13mw units, while the other four are 7.2 mw. Two 13mw is down, two 7.2mw is down, so there are only four units barely surviving, at it's best and have been schedule to be moved to the "intensive care unit" anytime, any day, any hour, or any minute, as I write this letter to the editor.

Believe me, I know! (If CUC generation is only producing 40 percent, less these for 25 percent for line loss which customers pays for).

CUC's customers are suffering from the high cost of kilowatts consumed and this must be stopped!

No legislation, no executive order can solve this dilemma! The answer to this crisis, and to help the irate customers of CUC, especially the business community, is very simple, and we don't need an outside expensive consultants to tell us! To CUC, to the governor, to the Legislature—return our power plant engines to "heavy residual fuel oil" HFO or as industry name No. 6. during the 1990s, this was the oil used, and presently it is 40 percent cheaper than DFO (diesel fuel oil no. 2).

When this HFO oil was used in 1990, diesel fuel was only used during startup and shutdown, no more no less! Why crucify the crying public for the horrendous power rates they are suffering today, when we can sit down and speak in one language, and eliminate outside consultants, that cost a tremendous amount of fees that we can do locally?

I say, rehabilitate the heating system, and the pipelines, and rehabilitate "Tank 104" because it was designed for "heavy fuel oil" and request the USEPA for another waiver for burning HFO fuel. Let us request "DOI" to assist with the waiver!

Oversight hearings for CUC will not help, or alter its path! Cutting of CUC's employee salary, etc., is uncalled for, and it shouldn't have been done so, in the first place.

Cut-off highly paid consultants we don't need! Use our cultivated local talents to solve our power crisis. are you politician ashamed to use your own trained, nurtured asset locally? If you do, you shouldn't be sitting in your seat today.

Ramon "Kumoi" S. Guerrero
Via email

$70K needed to keep KRNM on the air

It's been reported that KRNM may soon shut down and go off the air. That it needs $70,000 by May 31 just to keep going until the end of this fiscal year, and, to stay on the air after that, about $150,000 per year. Sad to say, the reports are correct. KRNM might shut down. But—it doesn't have to! If enough people—individually, in pairs, or in groups—were to show their concern, were willing to do some selling, some campaigning, some work, the station wouldn't have to shut down. It could stay on the air.

But that support has to be shown NOW. Because if the station doesn't raise the necessary funds, it will be all over.

Granted, $70,000 is a lot of money—particularly right now, when everyone is hurting. But listeners aren't being asked, and aren't expected, to make up all of that through their own individual contributions. There are other many other sources of funds, other ways to raise money. Listeners—and their friends and neighbors—could hold a bake sale, or a yard sale, a white elephant sale. They could find someone willing to donate prizes and hold a raffle. They could ask companies, businesses to make a donation. They could write a grant application to some charitable organization. They—and their friends and neighbors—could lobby the legislature, or the local delegation, or the municipal council, or all three! There are as many ways to find funds as there are imaginations and the desire to do.

While KRNM has asked for funds before, this time it is different. This isn't like the semi-annual fundraisers KRNM has been doing ever since it started. This isn't just for holding on to what's already there. This time, if there's not enough support, the station just won't be there anymore.

Shamefully enough, up until now a lot of people haven't bothered to show their support for KRNM. They've gone on listening to Car Talk, or Morning Edition or Classical Guitar Alive, or Bioneers or Justice Talking or the Science Show, or the many other wonderful shows that are aired on KRNM every week, and even though they're told that Public Radio is listener supported, they don't seem to hear what's being said, or to believe it—they never contribute, send in a donation. They selfishly rely on others to do the supporting.

That may have worked in the past. But it won't work this time. Northern Marianas College, which has supported the station for the last 10 years, is feeling the budget crunch, just like everyone else. And for NMC, its classroom offerings, its teaching function, HAVE to take priority, even though KRNM does a lot of educating through its shows as well.

If you care, if you want to help, please contact KRNM station manager Carl Pogue at 234-5766, or call his cell at 484-2385 or send him an e-mail at carlp@nmcnet.edu and he will work with you to put together fund-raising projects. Or you can contact a member of the KRNM advisory board—Bud White, Jill Derickson, Ted Parker, Dr. Norma Ada, Alex Sablan, Efrain Camacho—and they will work with you as well.

It took a lot of work, and a long time, to bring Public Radio to the CNMI. It would be a shame if now, after only 10 years, it was forced to give up its license and go off the air.

Won't you help keep it going?

Ruth L. Tighe
Tanapag

THE NEED

From Page 10

All we need is a strong desire and determination to create a vocational trading school. We can and must help the youth who will be the backbone of our community. This vocational school is the surest way to wean ourselves away from non-resident workers.

Let us remember how the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library was built in 1990. It was built by donations from various people, institutions and the school children who wanted a library. Yet, this magnificent building was built at a cost of over $1.2 million without one cent received from the government. The late Governor Larry Guerrero in his wisdom asked the MPLA to grant the land to his office and then allowed the library to be built on it at no cost.

We can create a vocational school if we want to. We do not need big money, we do not need bureaucracy. Let's screw up our desire and determination. The youth are waiting. The future and betterment of our community is waiting. We need to get started training our youth to be productive and proud citizens now! They are our children.

If we act together we can create the school in less than six months.

After reading this article if you believe as I do that we desperately need a vocational school and want to help, please email me at tonypell@saipan.com or call me at 322-9221 and let's join forces and build this training center now!

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼77°	▲80° ▼74°	▲82° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲82° ▼74°

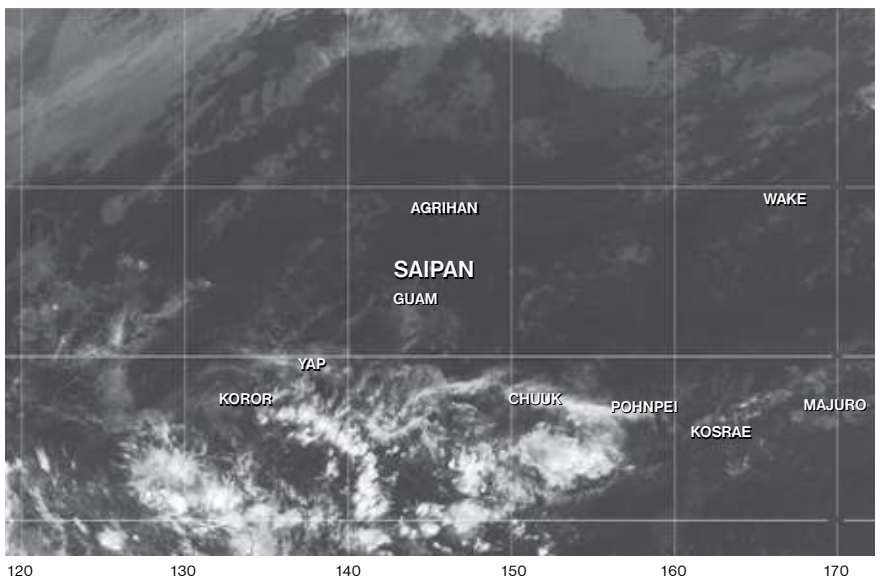
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲84	▼79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲90	▼81
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Majuro	Thundershowers	▲86	▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Cloudy	▲74	▼64
Beijing	Flurries	▲34	▼16
Hong Kong	Rain	▲57	▼54
Honolulu	Showers	▲75	▼69
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼43
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲60	▼45
Manila	Cloudy	▲91	▼77
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲82	▼66
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲82	▼71
New York	Showers	▲46	▼41
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲47	▼33
Paris	Rain/Snow	▲41	▼37
Pusan	Sunny	▲41	▼25
Rome	Showers	▲56	▼47
Salem	Rain	▲43	▼36
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲55	▼41
Seoul	Sunny	▲34	▼16
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲47	▼32
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲49	▼41

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, FEB. 3, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line reaches westward from 23N163E to end at 20N145E. Extensive cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 200 miles north of the boundary. An old shear line extends southwestward from 25N170E to end at 16N150E. Patchy clouds and scattered light showers are found along and up to 200 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough runs eastward from 2N130E to end at EQ139E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are seen well south of Palau or south of a line from 5N130E to EQ140E. Trade convergence north of the trough axis is also causing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of Koror and Yap within 70 miles of a line from 6N134E to 7N137E to 4N141E to EQ141E. A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of Chuuk or south of a line from EQ143E to 5N147E to 6N156E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers over Pohnpei, Kosrae, Kwajalein and Majuro to the dateline between 3N and 10N from 157E to 180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

07:26AM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
12:17PM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
04:55PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:46AM	6:16PM
Tuesday	6:45AM	6:17PM
Wednesday	6:45AM	6:17PM
Thursday	6:45AM	6:17PM
Thursday	6:45AM	6:18PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	04:16AM	03:35PM
Tuesday	05:07AM	04:32PM
Wednesday	05:55AM	05:28PM
Thursday	06:39AM	06:24PM
Friday	07:21AM	07:18PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contribution are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 2, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Saipan-Beijing			
CA 988	3:15am	7:00am	1,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Beijing-Saipan			
CA 987	6:05pm	1:55am+1	4,7
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

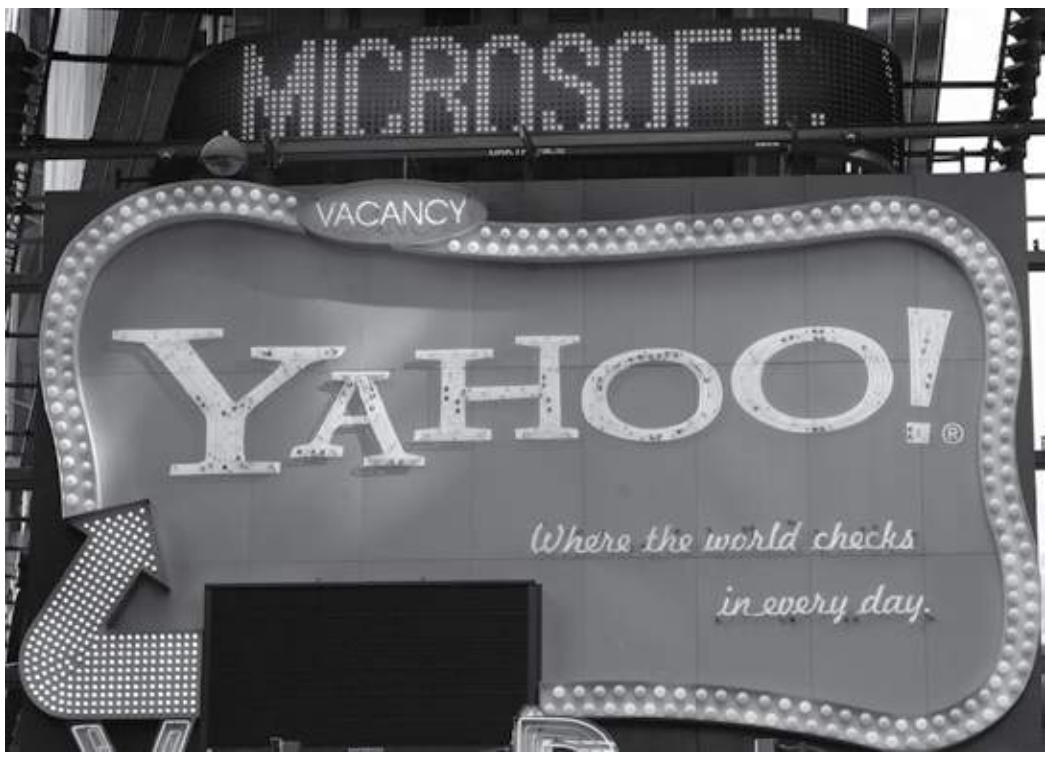
FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

Microsoft eyes Yahoo to topple Google



AP

A Times Square news ticker flashes a headline about Microsoft above a billboard for Yahoo! in New York in this Friday, May 4, 2007 file photo.

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Unable to topple Google Inc. on its own, Microsoft Corp. is trying to force crippled rival Yahoo Inc. into a shotgun marriage, with a wager worth nearly $42 billion that the two companies together will have a better chance of tackling the Internet search leader.

Microsoft's audacious attempt to buy Yahoo, spelled out in an unsolicited offer announced Friday, shows just how much Google threatens the world's largest software maker's grip on how people interact with computers.

For Yahoo, the bid represents another painful reminder of how missed opportunities and mismanagement combined to open the door for Google to supplant it as the Internet's main gateway, decimating its stock price in the process.

Redmond, Wash.-based Microsoft is trying to avoid a similar fate at Google's hands as more people access services and computer programs online instead of relying on packaged software applications.

Although Microsoft remains the world's most valuable technology company, its position will become more precarious unless it can cultivate a more loyal Internet audience and generate more online ad revenue to subsidize the free services taken for granted on the Internet.

Microsoft is acutely aware of the upheaval that can be caused by a pivotal shift in technology, having been the biggest beneficiary during the 1980s and 1990s of a transition from mainframe computers to personal computers that knocked IBM Corp. off its pedestal.

"Microsoft has to do this deal. It's a battle that Microsoft needs to win," said AMR Research analyst Jonathan Yarmis.

But there's no guarantee that Yahoo will be willing to sell to Microsoft—or that the deal will win the necessary approvals from antitrust regulators in the United States and Europe if Yahoo capitulates.

Sunnyvale-based Yahoo had little to say Friday beyond a terse statement assuring its shareholders that its board will "carefully and promptly" study the bid.

In a conference call Friday, Microsoft Chief Executive Steve Ballmer indicated he won't take no for an answer after Yahoo rebuffed takeover overtures a year ago.

"This is a decision we have—and I have—thought long and hard about," Ballmer said. "We are confident it's the right path for Microsoft and Yahoo."

Yahoo will likely face intense pressure to accept, given its steadily sliding profits and a murky 2008 outlook that caused its stock price to drop to a four-year low earlier this week.

Microsoft's $31-per-share offer—originally valued at $44.6 billion—represented a 62 percent premium to Yahoo's closing price late Thursday, although it's below Yahoo's 52-week high of $34.08 reached less than four months ago.

Military contractors are hard to fire

WASHINGTON (AP)—ITT Federal Services International, a defense contractor hired to maintain battle gear for U.S. troops in Iraq, repeatedly failed to do the job right.

Combat vehicles ITT declared as repaired and ready for action flunked inspections and had to be fixed again. Equipment to be sanitized for return to the United States was found caked with dirt. And ITT's computer database for tracking the work was rife with errors.

Formal "letters of concern" were sent to the contractor. Still, the Army didn't fire ITT. Instead, it gave the Colorado Springs, Colo.-based company more work to do. Since October 2004, ITT has been paid $638 million through the Global Maintenance and Supply Services contract.

The Army's ongoing arrangement with ITT, detailed in an audit from the Government Accountability Office, shows how captive the military has become to the private sector for overseas support. Even when contractors don't measure up, dismissing them may not be an option because of the heavy pace of operations.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., co-author of legislation creating a special commission to examine wartime contracting, said poor-performing contractors are more likely to get bonuses than to be penalized.

"It has just been a mess," McCaskill, a former state auditor, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It's bad enough how much this war is costing. But it's heartbreaking the amount of money that has just gone up in smoke."

In ITT's case, there were too few soldiers to handle the maintenance duties and no other contractors ready to step in quickly, according to Redding Hobby, the Army Sustainment Command's executive director for field support operations.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Chrysler supplier files for bankruptcy

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP)—Chrysler LLC scrambled to maintain its inventory of plastic parts after a supplier filed for bankruptcy protection. Plastech Engineered Products Inc. apparently failed to negotiate a bailout package with its customers, The Wall Street Journal reported Friday. Dearborn-based Plastech agreed to supply Chrysler through the weekend, spokeswoman Michele Tinson said. The bankruptcy filing had not forced Chrysler to shut down any plants, Tinson said. "But it could potentially," she said. "It could impact a number of plants." Calls to Plastech headquarters were not answered late Friday. Chrysler was Plastech's fourth-largest customer, The Journal said. The company has 8,000 employees at more than 30 plants in North America.

Exxon, Chevron post record profits

HOUSTON (AP)—Suppose Exxon Mobil decided to return the favor and buy you a tank of gas. Then again, why stop there? The oil giant turned a profit last year fat enough to buy a fill-up for every car, truck and SUV in America—four times. Beating its own record to rack up the largest annual corporate profit in American history, Exxon Mobil Corp. said Friday it earned $40.6 billion for the year, reaping the benefits of crude-oil prices around $100 a barrel. Exxon Mobil also topped its own record for profit in a single quarter, posting net income of $11.7 billion for the final three months of the year—about $1 billion more than the same period in 2005, the previous quarterly record.

Motorola shares soar on possible breakup

CHICAGO (AP)—Motorola Inc.'s investors were placated for at least a day—and sent its battered stock soaring 10.3 percent Friday—after the company signaled it may get out of its trademark cell-phone business. Industry analysts said the handset maker could get at least $5 billion for the troubled unit. But they cautioned that a sale, spinoff or joint venture won't alter the unit's severe challenges and said the lack of promising products in the pipeline may be a deterrent to any buyer. The company also faces the prospect of more job cuts and a repeat proxy fight with the shakeup-minded Carl Icahn, who nominated four new members for the board of directors and told Motorola he has increased his stake to 5 percent.

Amazon's hot new item: Its data center

SEATTLE (AP)—Critics thought it was over the top when Amazon.com Inc. expanded from books into music in 1998. When the Web retailer let competitors start selling things alongside its own inventory in 2000, they said Amazon had gone nuts.

In both cases, Amazon proved them wrong. Media sales now total in the billions each quarter, and third-party merchandise, more profitable for Amazon than its own wares, makes up nearly a third of everything sold through the site.

Now, Amazon is making an even greater stretch—selling storage, computing power and other behind-the-scenes data center services.

The venture, which Amazon expects will grow into a significant business segment, could help keep the company strong if retailers get hit by an economic downturn. More broadly, Amazon Web Services, as the business is called, could improve chances for a new generation of Web startups by slashing how much they spend up front on costly infrastructure.

AP

Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon.com, introduces the Kindle at a news conference in New York in this Nov. 19, 2007 file photo.

MileMeter Inc., a Dallas-based startup that plans to sell auto insurance by the mile, started out running its own server in a data center. Recently, it moved most of its applications onto virtual computers in Amazon Web Services' Elastic Compute Cloud.

Financials cause slide in S&P 500 profit

NEW YORK (AP)—It doesn't take highly paid Wall Street analysts to figure out why corporate earnings are trending toward their worst performance in six years.

With roughly half the companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 having reported fourth-quarter results, banks and brokerage have proven to be the biggest drag on the overall earnings picture. Profit declined 22 percent from the year-ago period for all the S&P components—but, stripping out banks and brokerages, earnings for the index's component companies would be up almost 12 percent.

"There are really two different markets out there," said Howard Silverblatt, senior index analyst at S&P. "It won't be hard for some fund managers to beat the index so long as they stayed out of the financials."

He said the fourth quarter looks to be the worst since the dot-com implosion in 2001, when a plunge in profit from technology companies caused S&P 500 earnings to tumble 24 percent year-over-year. This time around, the collapse of the subprime mortgage market is to blame.

Global banks and brokerages have written down almost $150 billion due to steep losses from investments tied to the subprime mortgages that went sour last year as interest rates rose and the housing market slumped. Many financial institutions have been forced to secure more capital to shore up their finances, and analysts believe more charges for bad investments are ahead.

These losses have caused financial companies' fourth-quarter earnings to come in well below Wall Street expectations. Banks and brokerages made up about two-thirds of the companies that missed analyst projections during the quarter.

Nation

South, West—candidates make final push

By DAVID ESPO
AP SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AP
People wave back to Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., as she waves at a rally at the University of Arizona in Tucson Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008.

Sen. John McCain barnstormed through a skeptical South on Saturday, campaigning for a Super Tuesday knockout in the Republican presidential race. Democratic rivals Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton worked the West on the final weekend before primaries and caucuses in more than 20 states.

"I assume that I will get the nomination of the party," McCain told reporters, the frontrunner so confident that he decided to challenge rival Mitt Romney in his home state of Massachusetts.

Romney, on the other hand, celebrated a causus victory in Maine and told reporters he plans to do well Tuesday, "planning on getting the kind of delegates and support that shows that my effort is succeeding, and taking that across the nation. ... I am encouraged by the support which I'm seeing grow for me."

Clinton stressed pocketbook issues, the home mortgage crisis in a discussion with voters in a working class neighborhood, and health care at a noisy rally in California attended by former Los Angeles Lakers basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson. "This is a cause that is the central passion of my public life," she said, and jabbed at Obama on the issue.

"My opponent will not commit to universal health care. I do not believe we should nominate any Democrat who will not stand here proudly today and commit to universal health care," she said in the continuation of a monthslong debate over which candidate's plan would result in wider coverage among the millions who now lack it.

Obama stopped in Idaho, where caucuses offer a mere 18 delegates on Tuesday, and he worked to reassure Westerners on two fronts.

"I've been going to the same church for more than 20 years, praising Jesus," he told an audience in Boise, warning his listeners not to believe e-mails that falsely say he is a Muslim.

In a region of the country where hunting is a way of life, he also said he has "no intention of taking away folks' guns." The Illinois senator did not mention his support for gun control legislation.

The two remaining Democratic rivals compete in primaries in 15 states as well as caucuses in seven more plus American Samoa on Tuesday, the busiest day of this or any other nominating campaign. A total of 1,681 delegates is at stake, including 370 in California alone, and the two campaigns have said they do not expect either side to emerge with a lock on the nomination.

Both have already begun turning their attention to Feb. 12 primaries in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

Romney wins Maine caucuses

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP)—Mitt Romney coasted to a win in presidential preference voting by Maine Republicans on Saturday, claiming his third victory in a caucus state and fourth overall.

The former Massachusetts governor had 52 percent of the vote with 68 percent of the towns holding caucuses reporting. John McCain trailed with 21 percent, Ron Paul was third with 19 percent, and Mike Huckabee had 6 percent. Undecided votes accounted for 2 percent.

The nonbinding votes, the first step toward electing 18 Maine delegates to the Republican National Convention, took place in public schools, Grange halls, fire stations and town halls across the state.

The Associated Press uses presidential preferences expressed in those caucuses to project the number of national convention delegates each candidate will have when they are chosen at Maine's state convention, calculating that Romney will wind up with all 18 delegates when all is said and done.

Campaigning in Minnesota, Romney noted that his victory in Maine came despite McCain's endorsement by the state's two U.S. senators.

"The people of Maine joined those from across the nation in casting their vote for conservative change in Washington ... Like many Americans, the people of Maine are tired of Washington promises made but broken," Romney said in a statement.

The fight for delegate support in Maine came just ahead of Super Tuesday, giving candidates a chance to build momentum for the upcoming contests in more than 20 states.

Most of Maine's caucuses were held Saturday but a scattering of towns will hold theirs Sunday and later in the month. Party leaders were delighted with the heavy turnout, which they said was driven by the most hotly contested race in two decades.

Besides Paul, who visited Maine on Monday, Romney was the only candidate to show up or send a surrogate to campaign as the caucuses drew close. His oldest son Tagg campaigned Friday and appeared at caucuses Saturday.

5 shot dead at suburban Chicago store

TINLEY PARK, Ill. (AP)—A gunman fatally shot five women in a robbery at a store in a suburban Chicago strip mall before fleeing Saturday, prompting police to sweep through neighboring shops as terrified customers watched.

The victims, including at least one employee, were killed at a Lane Bryant clothing store at the Brookside Marketplace, police Chief Mike O'Connell said.

Officers found the victims at the back of the store after getting a 911 call around 10:45 a.m. Police said a bystander told them that a man came out of the store and gave them a description.

Authorities said robbery was believed to be the motive. Police searched for the gunman using dogs and a helicopter equipped with infrared sensors but concluded he left the stores off Interstate 80 southwest of downtown Chicago.

"We do not want to compromise any evidence that may be out there ... I ask we keep family of the victims in our thoughts and prayers," O'Connell said.

In a Target store across the parking lot from Lane Bryant, terrified customers were herded to the front as police with pistols and rifles drawn went up and down the aisles and into storerooms searching for the gunman.

"I was so scared I couldn't think," said Selena Kujawa, who had just entered the store with her 5-year-old son when it was locked down. After about an hour, customers were told to leave.

"They told us to get in our cars and get out of here," Kujawa said.

Kujawa said her son was still asking about the shooting long after they had gotten home.

"He asked 'What happened to the people? Did they catch the bad guy?'" she said. "There will be lots of nightmares tonight."

Meanwhile, the Chicago police department warned its officers to pay attention to strip malls and other Lane Bryant stores, police spokeswoman Monique Bond said.

Groundhog predicts more winter weather

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa. (AP)—Brace yourself for more wintry weather. Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow Saturday, leading the groundhog to forecast six more weeks of winter.

The rodent was pulled from his stump by members of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club Inner Circle, top-hat- and tuxedo-wearing businessmen who carry out the tradition.

Each Feb. 2, thousands of people descend on Punxsutawney, a town of about 6,100 people some 65 miles northeast of Pittsburgh, to celebrate what had essentially been a German superstition.

The tradition is that if a hibernating animal sees a shadow on Feb. 2—the Christian holiday of Candlemas—winter will last another six weeks. If no shadow is seen, legend says spring will come early.

That was the forecast from Gen. Beauregard Lee, Punxsutawney Phil's counterpart in Lilburn, Ga. Beau did not see his shadow Saturday morning at the Yellow River Game Ranch.

It was the third year in a row the two groundhogs' predictions differed.

AP
John Griffiths, right, one of the handlers of weather predicting groundhog Punxsutawney Phil, holds Phil as his other handler, Ben Hughes, pets him on the head Ground Hog's Day in Punxsutawney, Pa. on Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008.

ACROSS THE NATION

Burial service for slain pregnant Marine

VANDALIA, Ohio (AP)—Family and friends wept and prayed Saturday at a funeral Mass for a pregnant Marine found slain in North Carolina. The service for Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach drew hundreds of mourners to St. Christopher Catholic Church near Dayton. Four uniformed marines wheeled Lauterbach's coffin down the aisle to the strains of "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory." A small silver casket bearing Lauterbach's unborn child, who she had named Gabriel, was placed next to it. Federal authorities have said the man suspected of killing her, Marine Cpl. Cesar Laurean, has likely fled to Mexico. Lauterbach failed to show up for work in mid-December, and last month her burned remains were found with those of her fetus in a fire pit in the backyard of Laurean's house in Jacksonville, N.C.

Mormon church president laid to rest

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Gordon B. Hinckley was remembered as a "prophet to the people" on Saturday as tens of thousands of faithful Mormons gathered to say goodbye to the church's longtime president. The funeral at the conference center of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints capped a week of mourning for Hinckley, who died Jan. 27 at age 97. Hinckley's children and closest advisers chronicled his lifetime service to the faith, including unprecedented growth during his 13 years as president. "He was our prophet, seer and revelator. He was an island of calm in a sea of storm," said Thomas S. Monson, a friend for more than 50 years, a close advisor and likely to be Hinckley's successor. He called him a "prophet to the people."

Ga. police officers shoot each other

BUFORD, Ga. (AP)—Two off-duty officers from different police departments wounded each other in a gun fight in the middle of a road in an Atlanta suburb, authorities said. Both officers suffered non-life-threatening wounds, police said. Their conditions were not immediately known on Saturday. Officer Jay Daily, a five-year veteran of the Duluth Police Department, exchanged multiple gunshots with Fulton County officer Paul Phillips on Friday afternoon, police said. Daily was in custody Saturday, charged with aggravated assault, Cpl. Illana Spellman of the Gwinnett County police said. "It's been confirmed that the Duluth police officer was the aggressor in this case," Spellman said.

Asia

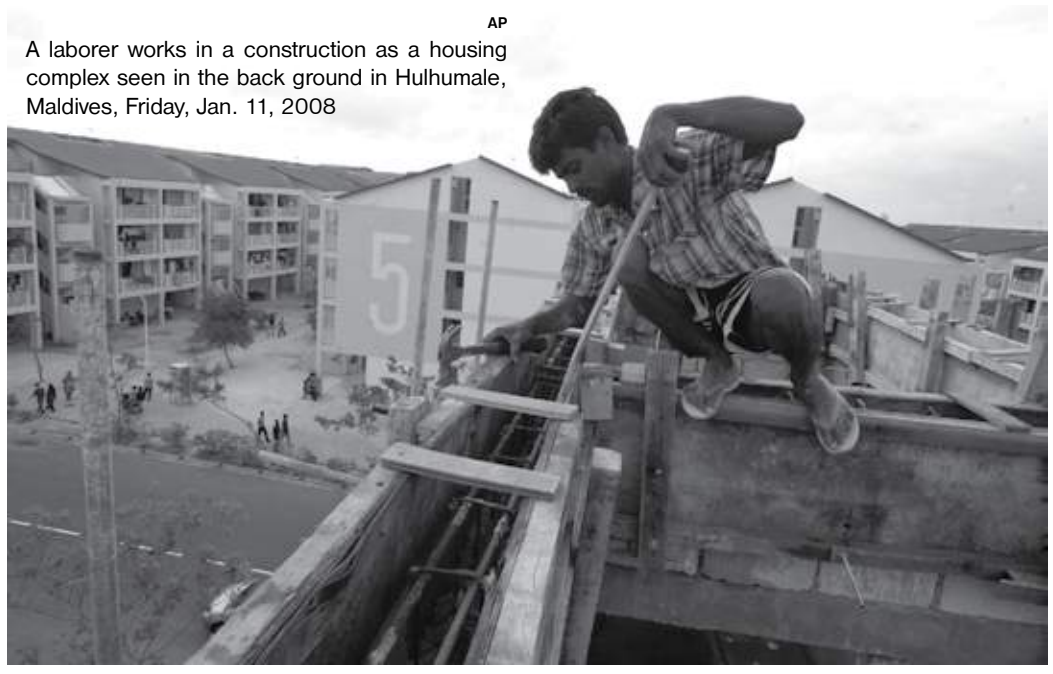
A brand new island: The Maldives built it, but no one came

HULHUMALE, Maldives (AP)—Running out of space in its crowded capital, this republic of 1,200 islands thought it had a can't-miss solution: build another island.

Planners weren't discouraged when people started eating the freshly planted palm saplings, or called the new island an ugly misfit among the picture-perfect beaches of their Indian Ocean archipelago. One day, they told themselves, the new island called Hulhumale would have it all: leafy streets, an artificial beach, a marina for megayachts, a luxury hotel and an entertainment strip.

Flash-forward a decade. Standing amid the empty, windswept expanse of crushed coral lots, the man charged with creating the island, Mahjoob Shujau, observes: "We all have hopes, we all have dreams."

AP



A laborer works in a construction as a housing complex seen in the back ground in Hulhumale, Maldives, Friday, Jan. 11, 2008

And, as the 39-year-old bureaucrat knows all too well, there's also reality—"We built it, but the people, they are not coming."

Considered sleepy even by the standards of this relatively slow-paced nation, Hulhumale (Hoo-la-MA-lay') has attracted only about 5,000 people—plus a few donated cows—since the first houses went up in 2003. That's far fewer than the 150,000 planners say could fit into the 465-acre (188-hectare) island.

But the story of Hulhumale is no mere tale of thwarted government dreams; it's a snapshot of a society in flux: a once poor and traditional society struggling to cope with an influx of tourism dollars and urbanization—challenges like overcrowding and unemployment unheard of here just two decades ago.

Most of the Maldives' 360,000 people are scattered among some 200 islands, often fewer than 1,000 to an island with little to do apart from fishing.

The young and ambitious head for Male—the little country's big city, a mini-metropolis that can be crossed on foot in about 30 minutes beach-to-beach. Its pastel apartment blocks, modern mosques, glass office towers and late-night alcohol-free cafes give Male (MA-lay') the feel of a Muslim Miami Beach. The few young men who can afford imported sports cars cruise the streets but traffic rarely moves faster than 20 mph (32 kph).

One reason people stay out late is, there's often no room at home.

The capital's population has nearly doubled to more than 100,000 in the past decade, making it one of the world's most crowded cities. Space is so scarce that the yearly rent on a typical two-bedroom apartment is often more than triple the average per capita income of US$2,700 (€1,840), forcing friends, family and even strangers to share.

Ibrahim Ali, a 26-year-old store clerk who moved here from a remote atoll six years ago, shares a room with eight other young men. They sleep in shifts. "Four of us have early work and they sleep at this time," he says over a plate of tuna and eggs at a seaside cafe at 2 a.m. on a Monday. "I go to bed late and sleep in the morning." His workday starts at noon.

Ali is precisely the kind of person officials thought would move to Hulhumale, where rents are about 30 percent cheaper and there's plenty of space.

Pakistan re-arrests prominent lawyer

LAHORE, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan authorities put a prominent lawyer back under house arrest Saturday after he tried to visit the grave of slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, his spokesman said.

Aitzaz Ahsan's detention came just two days after he had been released from three months of house arrest. Ahsan, the president of the Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association, was first arrested during President Pervez Musharraf's crackdown under a state of emergency last year.

Police stopped Ahsan at the airport in the eastern city of Lahore and told him he could not fly to Sindh province where he planned to visit Bhutto's grave. Bhutto was assassinated Dec. 27 while leaving an election campaign rally.

Sindh Home Minister Akhtar Zamin said Ahsan had been banned from the province. "We are in an election process, and we don't want anybody to come into the province and disrupt the election process," Zamin said.

Ahsan returned home, telling reporters that the ban was illegal and had been issued on the federal government's orders.

"I was just going to condole the death of our slain leader, but the government is scared and took this illegal action," he said. "We will contest this move."

Later, Punjab provincial authorities served Ahsan with an order confining him to his home for 30 days, according to his spokesman Aftab Alam. No reason was given for his detention.

NKorea in dilemma over aid from Seoul

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea is facing its worst food shortage in years, yet its rich southern neighbor has yet to hear the usual cry for help.

Instead, the communist regime is silent, and most experts see a connection to the election of a new South Korean president, conservative Lee Myung-bak, who wants concessions from North Korea in exchange for aid.

Lee's Grand National Party has argued that South Korea's previous two presidents gave too much unconditional aid to buy reconciliation with the North. The party was a regular target of North Korean criticism. Now Pyongyang finds itself having to work with someone it dubbed a "philistine" and "traitor."

That makes it hard for the regime to make the opening pitch for aid "because that could be seen as an expression of its weakness," said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies.

The World Food Program predicts North Korea will fall some 1.4 million tons short of its food needs this year, because of flooding triggered by the heaviest rainfall in 40 years. The floods, which left some 600 people dead or missing, also destroyed more than 11 percent of the country's crops, according to North Korea's state media.

Past crop failures have led to famine, and North Korea usually makes its requests for fertilizer aid between mid-January and mid-February for the spring planting season in March. South Korea typically provides 20 percent to 30 percent of it—between 200,000 and 500,000 tons.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Taiwan's president visits disputed island in South China Sea; Philippines voices concern

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's president inaugurated a runway on a disputed island in the South China Sea, sparking a protest from the Philippines which also claims sovereignty over the isle, officials said. Chen Shui-bian, the first Taiwanese president to ever visit Taiping island in the Spratlys chain, also met with troops there during his brief visit Saturday, said Lee Nan-yang, the president's spokesman. "There's no question about Taiwan's sovereignty on Taiping island, and we will continue to build structures there to help beef up patrols and sea security," Chen said in a statement after returning from the island 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) south of Taiwan. Lee said Chen "inaugurated a runway on the island that was built for humanistic use in the event of shipwrecks and other disasters." In Manila, Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo called Chen's visit "lamentable." "The Philippines expresses serious concern over this reported development that works against the joint efforts by claimant countries in the South China Sea to achieve peace and stability in the region," Romulo said in a statement.

ADB, other donors to give Bangladesh US$190 million for cyclone relief

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Asian Development Bank and other aid agencies will give Bangladesh US$190 million (€128 million) in loans and grants to assist in recovery from a devastating cyclone last year, the Manila-based bank said Friday. A loan of US$120 million (€81 million) will be provided by the ADB, along with US$60 million (€40.4 million) from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. The Canadian International Development Agency also is arranging a US$10 million (€6.72 million) grant while ADB will provide a separate US$200,000 (€134,500) technical assistance grant. Tropical Cyclone Sidr struck Bangladesh's southwest coast Nov. 15, killing more than 3,300 people and leaving tens of thousands homeless. The floods and cyclone affected 25 million people and caused losses of up to US$3 billion (€2 billion), the ADB said.

2 police, 3 militants die in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—A police raid in Pakistan's northwest Saturday triggered a shootout that killed two officers and three militants and led the insurgents to use women and children as human shields, officials said. It was the latest clash between pro-Taliban militants and security forces in areas near the Afghan border. The six-hour gunbattle occurred in Mardan town, about 30 miles northeast of Peshawar, the capital of North West Frontier Province, when officers surrounded a house and asked the occupants to surrender, said Abdul Qayyum, a local police official. Qayyum would not say what prompted the raid, but said the militants were using assault rifles and that the way they resisted showed they were well trained. He also said the militants briefly used some women and children as human shields. One officer was wounded.

China says no poison found in dumplings

BEIJING (AP)—China's product safety agency cast doubt Saturday on claims that a Chinese dumpling maker sickened consumers in Japan, saying tests on its ingredients found none of the insecticide cited by Japanese authorities.

The Chinese company that made the dumplings, Tianyang Food Processing Ltd., also said Saturday that no pesticide residue was found in the factory and ruled out any chance of contamination during transportation inside China.

Japanese authorities say dumplings made by Tianyang were contaminated with methamidophos, which sickened at least 10 people.

AP

Two Chinese man looks at packages of frozen dumplings of various brands on sale at a supermarket in Beijing, China, Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008.

Chinese experts tested 30 ingredients in dumplings from the same batch as those that were exported to Japan, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine said.

"Tests were conducted for such chemicals as methamidophos, and the results showed that without exception nothing was found," the agency said in a one-sentence statement on its Web site. It did not say what other chemicals it tested for.

AQSIQ and other Chinese agencies were sending food experts to Japan to take part in the investigation, the agency said in a separate statement.

The uproar is especially sensitive for China, which is reeling from a series of liability incidents over food, tires and other goods. With the Beijing Olympics starting in August, the government is trying to assure foreign athletes and tourists they will be safe.

The case is unusual because Chinese food processors that export to Japan are regarded as industry leaders in quality and safety. They are inspected regularly by Japanese officials to enforce Tokyo's quality standards, which are among the world's most stringent.

World

Rain forests fall at 'alarming' rate

ABO EBAM, Nigeria (AP)—In the gloomy shade deep in Africa's rain forest, the noontime silence was pierced by the whine of a far-off chain saw. It was the sound of destruction, echoed from wood to wood, continent to continent, in the tropical belt that circles the globe.

From Brazil to central Africa to once-lush islands in Asia's archipelagos, human encroachment is shrinking the world's rain forests.

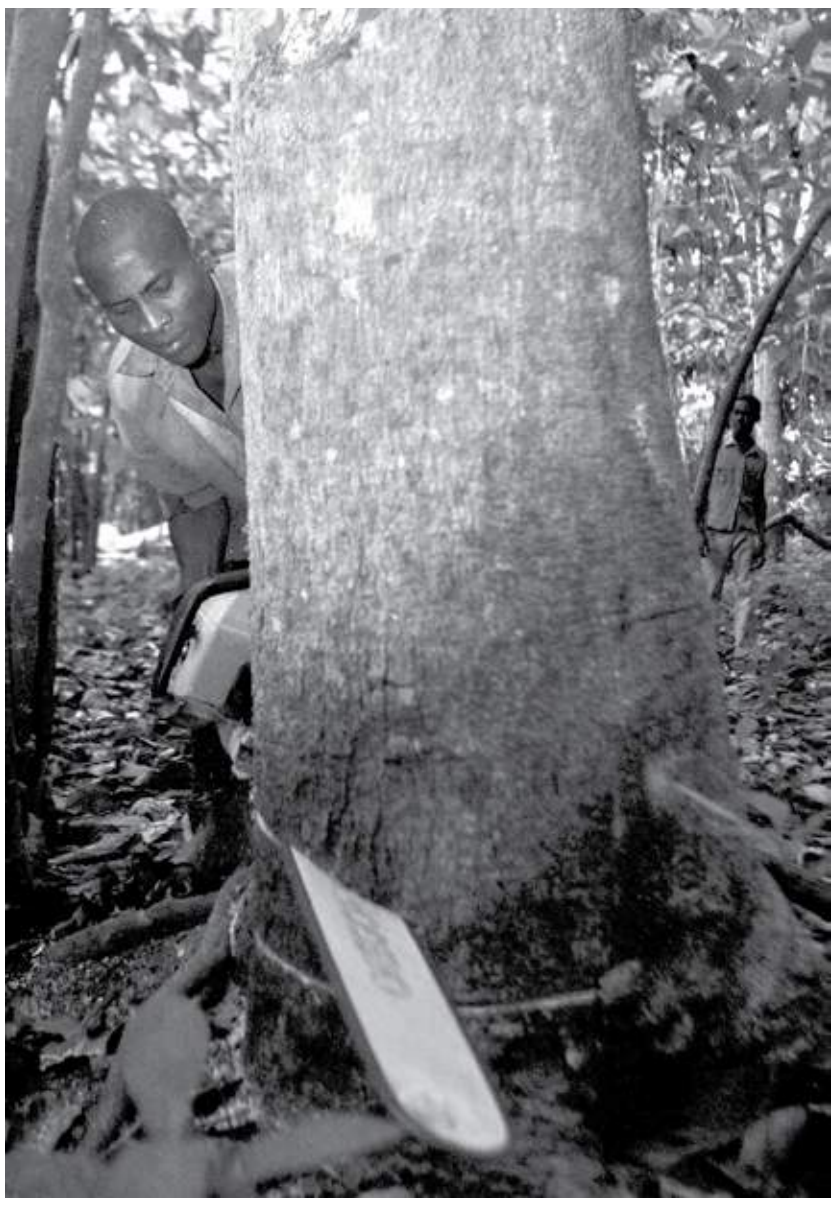
The alarm was sounded decades ago by environmentalists—and was little heeded. The picture, meanwhile, has changed: Africa is now a leader in destructiveness. The numbers have changed: U.N. specialists estimate 60 acres of tropical forest are felled worldwide every minute, up from 50 a generation back. And the fears have changed.

Experts still warn of extinction of animal and plant life, of the loss of forest peoples' livelihoods, of soil erosion and other damage. But scientists today worry urgently about something else: the fateful feedback link of trees and climate.

Global warming is expected to dry up and kill off vast tracts of rain forest, and dying forests will feed global warming.

"If we lose forests, we lose the fight against climate change," declared more than 300 scientists, conservation groups, religious leaders and others in an appeal for action at December's climate conference in Bali, Indonesia.

The burning or rotting of trees that comes with deforestation—at the hands of ranchers, farmers, timbermen—sends more heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than all the world's planes, trains, trucks and automobiles. Forest destruction accounts for about 20 percent of manmade emissions, second only to burning of fossil fuels for electricity and heat. Conversely, healthy forests absorb carbon dioxide and store carbon.



AP

An unidentified man cuts down tree in a forest in Ikom, Nigeria, Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007

"The stakes are so dire that if we don't start turning this around in the next 10 years, the extinction crisis and the climate crisis will begin to spiral out of control," said Roman Paul Czebiniak, a forest expert with Greenpeace International. "It's a very big deal."

The December U.N. session in Bali may have been a turning point, endorsing negotiations in which nations may fashion the first global financial plan for compensating developing countries for preserving their forests.

US, Iraqis vow to avenge bombings

BAGHDAD (AP)—A top U.S. commander said Saturday that two bombings carried out by women wrapped in bombs that killed nearly 100 people in Baghdad underscored that al-Qaida in Iraq remains a serious threat, but he vowed the military would "not give back any terrain" to the terror network.

Iraqis in Baghdad demanded more protection for markets, saying one of the bombers wasn't searched because she was known as local beggar and the male guards were reluctant to search women because of Islamic sensitivities.

U.S. and Iraqi officials said Saturday that pictures showed the bombers had Down syndrome and likely did not know they were being used in Friday's attacks.

Ali Nassir, a 30-year-old day laborer whose hobby is raising birds, said people with disabilities often beg for food and money at the weekly al-Ghazl pet bazaar on Fridays.

"I saw the suicide bomber and she was begging," Nassir said, adding the woman was known to the vendors. "The security guards did not search her because she is a woman and because it is not unusual to have beggars, mainly women and children, moving around in the market."

Iraqi officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were authorized to release the information, raised the death toll of Friday's attacks to at least 99—62 people in the first blast at the central al-Ghazl bazaar and 37 others about 20 minutes later at the New Baghdad area pigeon market in southeastern Baghdad.

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the top U.S. commander in Baghdad, said the women appeared to be unwitting attackers.

"It appears the suicide bombers were not willing martyrs, they were used by al-Qaida for these horrific attacks," he said. "These two women were likely used because they didn't understand what was happening and they were less likely to be searched."

Chad rebels fight troops in capital

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Hundreds of rebels charged into Chad's capital aboard pickup trucks Saturday, clashing with government troops around the presidential palace in the most forceful attempt yet to oust President Idriss Deby.

The violence endangered a $300 million global aid operation supporting millions of people in the former French colony and also delayed the deployment of the European Union's peacekeeping mission to both Chad and neighboring Central African Republic.

Libya's official news agency, JANA, reported that Chadian rebel leader Mahamat Nouri agreed to a cease-fire Saturday night after speaking to Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, who was appointed by the African Union to mediate in the crisis.

Rebel spokesman Mahamat Hassane Boulmaye said he had not heard of any cease-fire and did not believe Nouri would agree to an unconditional end to hostilities. "The fighters would rebel," Boulmaye told The Associated in an early morning telephone call Sunday. Boulmaye said he was speaking from the border with Sudan and had not spoken to Nouri since Saturday afternoon.

The rebels arrived after a three-day push across the desert from the eastern border with Sudan in about 250 pickups with mounted submachine guns.

The rebels gathered outside N'Djamena overnight before 1,000 to 1,500 fighters entered early Saturday and spread through the city, said Col. Thierry Burkhard, a French military spokesman.

Hamas: Egypt to seal Gaza border Sunday

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—Egypt will close its breached border wall with Gaza on Sunday in coordination with Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that blew it up, a senior Hamas leader said Saturday after meeting with Egyptian officials.

But Mahmoud Zahar said the closure would be temporary while the Egyptians search for a way to reopen the border. Hamas blew the wall open on Jan. 23 to end a seven-month Israeli and Egypt blockade of Hamas-ruled Gaza.

Egyptian officials were not available for comment on the Hamas claims. It was not clear whether Egypt was considering the group's demand for a say in running the Egypt-Gaza border.

Any role for the Islamic militants on the border would be sure to anger the international community and Hamas' archrival, the moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, because it would amount to tacit recognition of Hamas rule in Gaza.

Hamas violently wrested control of the tiny seaside territory, home to 1.5 million Palestinians, in June, leaving Abbas controlling only the West Bank.

Since the border breach, hundreds of thousands of Gazans have flooded Egypt's border area and Hamas has thwarted repeated attempts by Egypt to reseal the frontier.

On Saturday, Egyptian security forces arrested two Palestinians carrying a bomb in el-Massoura, a village about 2.5 miles west of the border with Gaza, a Sinai security official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media. A police official in Cairo said the two had been trying to reach beach resorts in the southern Sinai.

WORLD BRIEFS

Army probe: Israel bungled Lebanon war

JERUSALEM (AP)—An internal military investigation has concluded that Israel's 2006 war against Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon failed because top commanders didn't communicate properly and were slow to prepare a ground offensive, the retired general who conducted the probe said Saturday. The reserve general, Udi Shani, also said that the army chief at the time, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, wasn't receptive enough to dissenting views among top commanders and should have spent more time near the front lines, rather than at military headquarters. "The military failed," Shani told Israel Radio. "It didn't operate properly." Shani conducted an internal army investigation of the performance of the top command at the same time as a five-member investigative panel headed by retired Judge Eliyahu Winograd examined the performance of the government and the army. The Winograd Commission said in its final report Wednesday that Israel did not win the 34-day war and the army did not provide an effective response to a deadly Hezbollah barrage of nearly 4,000 rockets on northern Israel. Israel conducted a heavy aerial campaign but reservists returning from the battlefield complained of poor training and a lack of ammunition and key supplies.

Serbia's Western path at stake in vote

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP)—An ally of late hardline President Slobodan Milosevic could return to power in Serbia's closely contested runoff election Sunday, ahead of a potentially explosive split by the province of Kosovo. The race pits pro-Western President Boris Tadic against right-wing extremist Tomislav Nikolic, who ruled with Milosevic during his bloody Balkan wars of the 1990s. The vote is predicted to be one of the tightest ever in Serbia. Although some pollsters gave Tadic a slight lead, they said the race was too close to call. The winner of the election could determine whether the Balkan country will continue on its path of pro-Western reform and closer ties with the European Union, or return to the isolation of the Milosevic's era.

US professor runs for Czech president

ANN ARBOR, Michigan (AP)—As the U.S. presidential race heats up, a University of Michigan professor is focusing his attention on an election of a different kind. Jan Svejnar, who has spent years guiding students in his role as a public policy and economics professor, says he's ready to make a real-world impact as the next president of the Czech Republic. "Being a president is sort of the utmost public policy one could have," he said. "It kind of naturally dovetails the kind of professional work I do." Svejnar, 55, served as an economic adviser to former Czech President Vaclav Havel and has Havel's backing, but he faces an uphill battle in the Feb. 8 election for the largely ceremonial post. Not only is Svejnar trying to unseat an incumbent, Vaclav Klaus, he also is battling against criticism of his U.S. ties, which aren't viewed as an asset in the race. His friends and colleagues on Michigan's Ann Arbor campus, however, are thrilled with Svejnar's candidacy.

French president marries model

PARIS (AP)—They had a glitzy, jet-setting courtship, but when it came time for the wedding, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and former supermodel Carla Bruni opted for a simple, classic ceremony—and the bride wore white. Sarkozy, 53, and Bruni, 40, were married Saturday in a small private ceremony at the presidential Elysee Palace, less than three months after they reportedly first met, and less than four months after his divorce from the previous first lady, Cecilia. The newlyweds said in a statement only that they tied the knot "in the presence of their families in the strictest privacy." The mayor who performed the ceremony filled in the details. "The bride wore white; she was ravishing, as usual," Francois Lebel, mayor of Paris' eighth arrondissement, or neighborhood, told Europe-1 radio. The groom wore a suit and tie, and he "wasn't bad either," Lebel said.

Health & Fitness

Growing up with, and out of, ADHD

By MELISSA HEALY
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Doctors and parents have long been left to guess at which children with a diagnosis of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, will go on to become adults with significant attention problems, how well they will navigate the challenges of adulthood and whether early recognition of—and medication for—their condition will make a difference in the trajectory of their lives.

Now a series of studies following 457 Finnish children from birth to ages 16 to 18 offers a glimpse of how the primary symptoms of ADHD typically evolve. At the same time, the studies raise provocative questions about the long-term effect of treating those symptoms with medication.

The studies focus on a subset of 188 Finnish teens considered to have "probable or definite ADHD" that will follow them into adulthood and 103 kids with conduct disorder—behavior issues that fall short of an ADHD diagnosis but put kids at higher risk for similar problems. Those teens were compared with a group of Finnish teens with no ADHD diagnosis.

Researchers found it is the can't-sit-still kids—the stereotype of the "ADHD generation"—who are most likely to mature out of the disease. Among those with persistent ADHD, they also found, half have problems with cognitive skills that are key to success in adulthood, but half have no such deficits.

And when researchers compare the findings from Finland with studies of Americans with ADHD, an even more intriguing discovery emerges: By the time they're in their late teens, those who receive drugs for attention problems seem to fare about the same as those who do not.

That is sure to fuel a simmering debate over the extent to which American kids with ADHD receive medication, often with little other support. In Finland, medication for ADHD is extremely rare.

"This begs the question: Are current treatments really leading to improved outcome over time?' " wrote neuropsychologist Susan L. Smalley and co-author Dr. Marjo-Riitta Jarvelin in a special section of December's Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. Smalley co-directs the Center for Neurobehavioral Genetics at the University of California, Los Angeles. Jarvelin is a professor of public health and of medicine at Imperial College School of Medicine in London and University of Oulu, Finland, respectively.

UCLA neuroscientist Robert Bilder, who was not involved in the Finnish research, said the studies suggest that ADHD might best be treated, in some kids, by shoring up weaknesses in underlying cognitive skills rather than by focusing exclusively on behavioral symptoms that can change with age.

"We all hope in the future we'll find the optimal combination of treatments—whether behavioral or pharmacological—that'll provide young people with these problems the best chance to succeed in school and social environments," Bilder said. "It's clear so far that no treatment's been identified that's a panacea."

Two decades ago, as the diagnosis and medication of American children with ADHD began to soar, researchers and psychiatrists scarcely entertained the possibility of adults with ADHD. Today, experts estimate that 4.4 percent of American adults—more than 10 million people—suffer from attention problems serious enough to warrant a diagnosis of ADHD.

But like the generation of children first diagnosed in large numbers with ADHD, research on what the disorder looks like across the life span has just begun to mature.

The new research suggests that, as children with ADHD grow into adolescence, it is the dreamy, forgetful, inattentive types who are most likely to continue to struggle with the disorder—especially if they also suffered from depression, anxiety or serious behavior problems in their preteen years. When their childhood symptoms included hyperactivity and impulsiveness as well as inattentiveness, their chances of having adult ADHD grew higher still.

Underscoring the strong role of genes in the development of attention deficit disorders, the studies found that a child's likelihood of having ADHD that persists into adulthood is significantly greater if either parent—but especially his or her father—suffers from serious attention problems too.

By contrast, those whose childhood symptoms were confined to hyperactivity are the most likely to mature out of the disease in adolescence, the Finnish studies found. By age 18, most with persistent ADHD will struggle with mental rather than physical restlessness.

In all, roughly 2 in 3 of the Finnish children who were diagnosed with ADHD as children continued to exhibit severe attention problems between ages 16 and 18.

In an introduction to the special section, Smalley points out several similarities and one intriguing difference between the Finnish children who were studied and their U.S. counterparts. ADHD appears with similar frequency in each of the two populations. Each population also has similar variations in symptoms of the disorder and similarly high rates of social and emotional problems -- depression, anxiety, defiant behavior -- that often afflict adolescents and adults with ADHD.

In Finland, as in studies of U.S. populations, about half of older teens with persistent ADHD performed poorly on tests of short-term, or working memory, and in cognitive skills that are key to problem-solving, making plans and executing tasks. And in each group, roughly the same proportion of children "mature out" of the disorder.

Although about 60 percent of American children diagnosed with ADHD are medicated -- at least at some point—for its symptoms, virtually no Finnish children are given medication. And yet, by the time they reach 16 to 18 years old, these two populations look very much the same.

In an interview, Smalley stressed that the studies do not cast doubt on the short-term benefits a child with ADHD might get from a stimulant or other medication that treats the symptoms of the disorder. She cited recent studies showing that at the end of one year, children medicated for ADHD symptoms function better at home and school than those who get behavioral and cognitive therapy. But after three years, the difference between the two groups begins to wane.

"We really need to look at how effective, really, is medication alone in long-term prevention" of the intellectual deficits and psychiatric problems that plague those with ADHD at higher rates than those without, Smalley said.

She also emphasized that the studies show that ADHD is "an extreme on a continuum" of normal for humans. Just as kids range across a spectrum in glucose tolerance or reading ability—putting some at higher risk of diabetes or dyslexia—they are also distributed across a spectrum in terms of their ability to focus, the strength of their working memory and their propensity for developing social and emotional problems. As children age, some will "age out" of the disorder, no longer meeting diagnostic standards for ADHD.

If better medication or specialized therapy, or both, can drive down the risks that these children will be hobbled by academic failure, ill-chosen impulses and other psychiatric problems, their other talents could shine through, Smalley said. And the world would be a better place for it, she added.

"We need to step back and embrace neurodiversity, diversity in human behavior and try to work on ways to embrace and enhance being at the extreme, instead of only focusing on the deficits and disorder aspects of ADHD," Smalley said.

CDC: Drug sickens dialysis patients

ATLANTA (AP)—More than 50 dialysis patients in 12 states have come down with allergic reactions that are being blamed on recalled batches of a blood thinner, federal health officials said Friday.

The cases are being called the largest national outbreak of treatment-related allergic reactions ever seen in dialysis patients.

Since the middle of November, 53 dialysis patients developed reactions after receiving injections of heparin made by Baxter Healthcare Corp. And another 36 reports are under investigation, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

None of the patients died, CDC officials said.

Baxter last month announced the voluntary recall of nine lots of multi-dose vials after learning of adverse events in dialysis patients, but the details of the outbreak were not disclosed until the CDC released the information late Friday afternoon.

The heparin has been tested for bacteria and endotoxin, but neither was found, said Dr. Alex Kallen, part of the CDC team looking into the illnesses.

"We don't know what the problem is," but heparin remains the leading candidate as the cause, said Dr. Priti Patel, another CDC investigator.

Kidney patients receive heparin to prevent clotting of blood during the dialysis process. Allergic-type reactions occurred within minutes of starting dialysis, CDC officials said.

The symptoms included facial swelling, nausea, rapid heart beat and decreased blood pressure. Some of these reactions may be severe or life threatening, Baxter officials said when announcing last week's recall.

Most of the patients improved after their dialysis session was interrupted or they were treated with antihistamines or steroids, CDC officials said.

The cases were reported at 19 dialysis facilities in California, Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

The recalled lots all came from a Baxter facility in Cherry Hill, N.J. The recall was specific to thousands of 1,000-unit, multi-dose vials, a company spokeswoman said.

CDC officials are also looking into allergic-type reactions in seven cardiac patients in North Carolina who got Baxter-made heparin. They're also looking into four cardiac cases in Florida, including one patient who died.

"We're investigating. There is one patient death that may be associated" with the 1,000-unit vials, said Erin Gardiner, a Baxter spokeswoman.

The investigation is not related to reports of about 40 people in Illinois and Texas who developed blood infections after taking heparin made by another company, Sierra Pre-Filled. Those infections were caused by a bacteria called Serratia marcescens found in a single batch of heparin-filled syringes made by that company in Angier, N.C.

Double dipping? 'Seinfeld' was right

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—Keep an eye on the salsa this Super Bowl Sunday: A researcher inspired by a famous "Seinfeld" episode has concluded that double dipping is just plain gross.

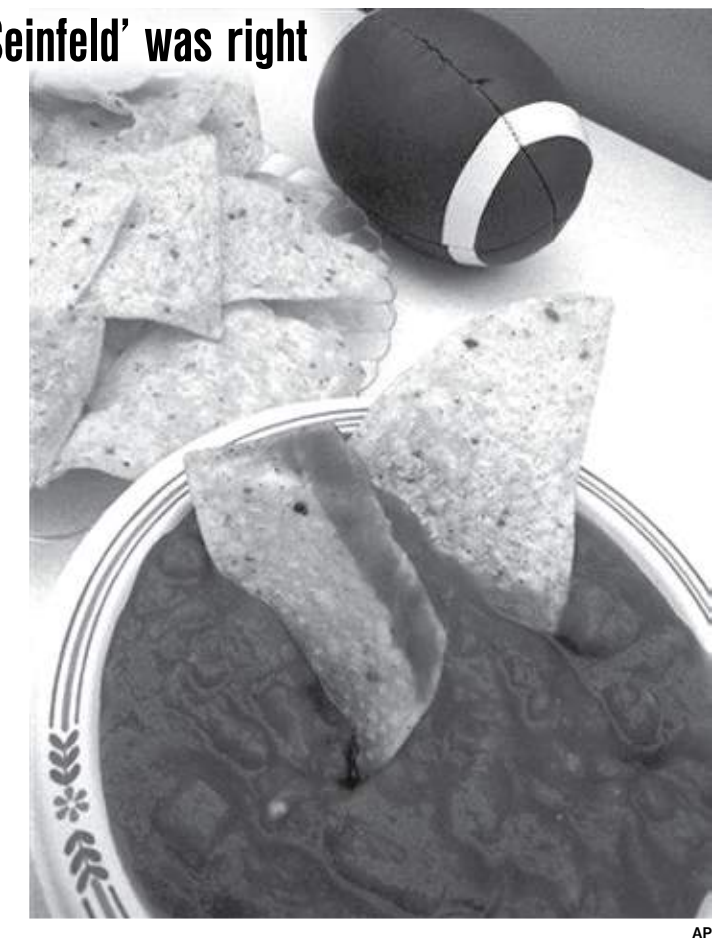
"That's like putting your whole mouth right in the dip!" George Costanza was admonished on the show after he dipped a chip twice at a wake. That's not too far off, said Clemson University professor Paul L. Dawson.

Last year the food microbiologist's undergraduate students examined the effects of double dipping using volunteers, wheat crackers and several sample dips. They found that three to six double dips transferred about 10,000 bacteria from an eater's mouth to the remaining dip sample.

"I was very surprised by the results," Dawson said in a telephone interview Thursday. "I thought there would be very minimal transfer. I didn't think we would be able to detect it."

The professor said the students' research didn't get into the risk behind such a bacteria transfer, but they got the idea.

"I like to say it's like kissing everybody at the party—if you're double dipping, you're putting some of your bacteria in that dip," Dawson said.



AP

This photo illustration shows tortilla chips and salsa, in New York, Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008.

The results of the research are scheduled to be published in the journal Food Safety within the next six months, he said.

Life & Style

Rio rocks as samba groups parade

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP)—A two-story high lion led an army of spinning women in gold-and-red hoop skirts Saturday night to open the carnival parade in a Rio stadium, a fierce competition between second-division samba groups seeking a promotion.

Estacio de Sa was the first group to go in the Sambadrome, sending down the golden lion on an enormous float surrounded by some 80 dancing men and women in skin-tight lion costumes. The whirling women followed, topped by headdresses fashioned from crystals and feathers.

"I've been all over the world. I've done carnival in the Caribbean and there's nothing like Brazil," Edgardo Levita, a 23-year-old Argentine decked-out in a pirate costume.

Saturday's parade is a warm-up for the "Special Group," which includes the city's top 12 samba schools all mounting 80-minute long parades Sunday and Monday nights in an effort to impress a panel of judges and be declared the year's champion.

But there's much at stake in Saturday's event. The group that receives the highest score gets promoted to the top division.

AP

Dancers perform next to a float during the parade of Uniao da Ilha second-division samba school at the Sambadrome, in Rio de Janeiro, Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008.

AP

Revelers participate in the Banda de Ipanema carnival parade in Rio de Janeiro, Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008.

"We work all year for this one day," said Fabio Ricardo, carnival designer for the second-division samba group Academicos da Rocinha. "It's not a game, it's a competition, like a marathon or like the Olympics."

Jumping from the second division to the first can be a financial windfall for a Samba group. The city provides second-tiered groups about $171,000 for the parade, while in the first-division they get $1.71 million, said Pedro Aridio, Rocinha's carnival director.

It's also hard to attract additional funding for a parade that isn't going to appear on TV.

Rocinha rose to the first division in 2005 only to see their hopes of staying in the elite group dashed by the pouring rain, which washed away the feathers and sequins and made the ground slippery for dancing.

"In carnival you never know what will happen until you hit the avenue," said Aridio, who believe the group has at least a fighting chance with this year's theme paying homage to the poor immigrants from Brazil's northeast, who make up most of the population of Rocinha, the city's biggest slum.

AP

Revelers pose with a person desguised as a panda bear during the Banda de Ipanema carnival parade in downtown Rio de Janeiro, Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008.

AP

Revelers embrace during the Banda de Ipanema carnival parade in Rio de Janeiro, Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008.

Meanwhile, revelers crowded downtown Rio de Janeiro to partake in the free-for-all celebrations around the Cordao de Bola Preta, the city's most traditional carnival band, which expects to attract over half a million people this year.

In the northeastern city of Recife, crowds topping the million mark turned out for the traditional Galo de Madrugada, or Midnight Rooster, celebrations that long ago were rescheduled for midday in order to reduce violence.

In the coastal city of Salvador, revelers got an early start clogging the major avenues to fall in behind bands playing Axe music from atop huge sound trucks and Blocos Afros, featuring hundreds of exotically costumed drummers.

And all across the nation, partiers and tourists nursed their hangovers on the beach.

"Wow, I can't remember most of it, but it was good," said Richard Cohen, a South African tourist as he sat on Copacabana beach, scraping away red nail polish painted on the night before at a carnival ball.

Street dancers kick off Brazil's carnival madness

By MICHAEL ASTOR
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP)—To the sound of blasting samba, men dressed as nuns swilled beer and danced down the cobblestone streets of a Rio hillside Friday night to kick off five days of uninhibited carnival madness in Brazil.

Dutch tourist Drey Urhahn watched in awe from a sidewalk in the historic Santa Teresa neighborhood as hundreds of members of the Carmelitas street samba group danced by him in flip-flops and black-and-white habits to thundering rhythms from a drum corps backed by a booming brass band.

"It's like a well-oiled machine," said Urhahn, 34, as he downed an ice-cold beer on a balmy Rio night after days of pre-carnival partying. "The sun, the naked women, it's crazy. I was drinking for a few days, so when it started, I was already exhausted, but the Brazilians keep going."

From Salvador and Recife in the north to the southern metropolitan sprawl of Sao Paulo, Brazilians staged elaborate parades led by topless dancing beauties and massive street parties fueled by bands atop tractor-trailer trucks rumbling slowly through city streets.

Rio's big carnival action comes on Sunday and Monday nights, when the city's top 12 samba schools mount 80-minute spectacles at the 88,500-capacity Sambadrome, featuring hundreds of drummers, thousands of dancers and about a dozen over-the-top parade floats.

But until then, street carnival groups—called "blocos"—own Rio's neighborhoods. As 80 drummers decked out in pink and green marched their way through the bohemian neighborhood of Lapa late Friday, a nearly naked women danced the samba behind them, emptying bars as men spilled into the street to shimmy behind her.

The madness in the streets has gotten so severe that some blocos have started keeping the time and location of their parades secret, to thin massive crowds.

"Every year, more and more blocos pop up spontaneously, so many that most of the e-mails I receive these days are complaining about how there are too many," said Rio de Janeiro Mayor Cesar Maia.

For some the craziness is too much, and many well-heeled Rio residents flee before it starts. Even Maia officially opened the carnival on Tuesday, while hardly anyone was partying, so he could jet to France for vacation.

The Sambadrome competition seems like anarchy, but it is actually a hard-fought competition as each group vies to be declared the year's champion.

That distinction brings little more than bragging rights, but because a single flaw in costumes, floats or dancing can doom a group's chance of winning, the parade at times seems tense.

At the bloco parties, anything goes—making them more and more popular because fans can join in.

Cordao de Bola Preta, one of the city's most traditional bloco carnival groups, expects some 600,000 people to turn out for their parade Saturday morning, more than the 400,000 who showed up last year.

"In reality, what we do is more like standing than parading, but we are a very democratic band and we always do our best to please the crowd," said Pedro Ernesto Araujo Marinho, Bola Preta's vice president.

Sometimes there are so many revelers, it is hard to hear the music, and Marinho concedes that if crowds continue to grow, they might have to do something to stem the tide.

One of the city's most popular blocos _ known as "Suvaco de Cristo," or Christ's Armpit, because members parade in the shadow of Rio's mountaintop statue of Christ the Redeemer _ solved the problem by not announcing when they intend to march.

"It was a very serious problem the year before last, when we had 50,000 people in the streets. It made for an interminable parade," said Joao Regazzi Avelleira, the carnival group's president. This year, he expects 10,000 to 15,000 people.

The Carmelitas group also kept the location of their street party secret, but Liz Desantis, 26, of San Diego, California, managed to get to the hillside in time to see old and young men gyrating to samba in their nun getups.

"It's just mayhem, a crazy party, tons of people," she said.

Readying Ringling Bros. circus for the road is elephantine feat

By MITCH STACY
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

TAMPA, Florida (AP)—Three weeks before opening night, director Amy Tinkham is at center ring working intently with a woman who will be lifted by her hair and twirl overhead seconds before motorcycles zip underneath her. That's supposed to happen just as an acrobat launches himself from an oversized swing high into a waiting net.

The hair woman—34-year-old Andrea Raffo, the wife of the tiger tamer—has to be hoisted by a rope attached to her flowing locks at just the right instant so she doesn't get splattered by the speeding motorcycles. Right after that come the elephants, galloping horses, guys on stilts, dancers, goats riding on little ponies, clowns and the rest of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus.

This carefully choreographed chaos, accompanied by uproarious music, is crammed into the opening minutes of the venerable Greatest Show on Earth, the 138th incarnation of which will be playing to around 5 million people in 84 U.S. cities during the next two years.

But before customers get to see the new two-hour extravaganza, it has to be organized, developed, massaged, manipulated and perfected during six weeks of intense rehearsals inside a cavernous exhibition hall at the state fairgrounds in Tampa, an hour north of the circus' winter home in Palmetto.

Starting the day after Thanksgiving Day in November, an international assortment of clowns, aerialists, contortionists, jugglers, dancers, musicians, daredevils and animal handlers came together for 40 days under the tutelage of the 44-year-old Tinkham, a sought-after choreographer and director who has worked with Madonna, Britney Spears and Aerosmith, just to name a few.

This, however, is her first time working with animals and a bunch of performers who don't speak English, not to mention the real risk of getting somebody seriously hurt if the timing isn't exactly right.

"It's really crazy fun," insists the tall, pretty blonde.

To get ready for Tampa, Tinkham says she watched videos of the performers and used toys to rough out the show on her dining room table last summer. Her children—ages 9, 4 and 18 months—were an eager focus group.

"I had to have a huge education on the circus, and this circus, and what the traditions are," she says. "And I think it became for me truly paying attention to my kids (about) what really is thrilling and what really is beautiful and what really is funny."

The show's direction was refined further in August during the "white model" meetings, another circus tradition. That's when planners gather around an all-white, 1-inch scale model of the performers and 80-by-120-foot (24-by-37-meter) ring to figure out how everything will work in the space. In a move that made headlines two years ago, the Ringling Bros. circus went from its traditional three rings to one big one, so kids could better focus on the action.

■ ■ ■

Earlier in the day, production manager Georgia Stephenson gathers most of the show's 108 performers in the plastic bleacher seats for morning announcements that are translated on the spot into Chinese and then Portuguese by other circus personnel. They are a virtual United Nations, hailing from 15 nations. Acrobats from China, motorcycle daredevils from Paraguay, dancers from Brazil.

AP
Sergie Temkaiev, left, works with Ukrainian performers on giant inner tubes during rehearsals for Ringling Bros. and Barnum Bailey Circus' Greatest Show on Earth Dec. 11, 2007 at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa, Fla.

"Good morning, greatest show on earth!" Stephenson says.

Among the cast is a slim, unassuming bald man from Brooklyn, New York, intently sewing a patchwork vest made entirely of silk neckties. His name is Tom Dougherty and he's apparently in his 40s, although he refuses to say for sure. When he puts on the vest, makeup and obligatory red nose, he becomes simply "Tom," the clown around whom the whole show revolves.

Dougherty, who studied theater in New York in the '70s, has been clowning for Ringling Bros. for 28 years, but this is his first time as the star or—in circus lingo—the "clown eccentric." During the show, he struggles with the ringmaster, a baritone-voiced veteran stage actor named Chuck Wagner, for the ringmaster's hat and control of the show. Hilarity ensues, of course.

Dougherty lives in a travel-trailer that goes where the circus goes. Most of the 275 performers and crew live aboard the circus train, a mile-long (1.6-kilometer-long) self-contained city on rails that looks generally like it did when Cecil B. DeMille chronicled the circus life in the 1952 film "The Greatest Show on Earth." Another full Ringling Bros. company just started the second year of its two-year tour by train, and a third, smaller unit travels by truck to smaller towns that the trains can't reach.

Performers in Dougherty's unit will cover around 32,000 miles (51,500 kilometers) together over the next two years, living in specially retrofitted cars bought from Amtrak. This group has 18 children traveling along with their performing parents.

"I find it's a very healthy place to live," Dougherty says. "You feel like you're in a very nice small town where your front yard changes every week."

At most stops along the way, crowds still turn out for the traditional walk of the elephants from the rail yard to the arena. In New York City every March, the pachyderms stop traffic as they parade at midnight from Queens to Madison Square Garden. Animal rights protesters sometimes show up, too.

Dougherty thinks America needs the circus more than ever.

"I think in this day and age where we have so much technology and we're always relating to screens, it's nice to come to someplace where you're relating to human beings again," he says. "We've lost that contact."

■ ■ ■

Nicole Feld is a pixyish, fast-talking 29-year-old who can't seem to sit still. She's co-producer of the circus with her father, Kenneth, chairman and CEO of Feld Entertainment. His father, promoter Irvin Feld, bought the circus from John Ringling North in 1967, a decade after the show moved from under the iconic big top canvas tent into arenas. Nicole has spent nearly every December of her life around circus rehearsals.

She says she's been around long enough to know that every circus, to satisfy its young, discerning audience, must include three nonnegotiable elements: animals, a trapeze performance and, of course, clowns. Attempts to deviate from that basic format have fallen flat over the years. And because of shrinking juvenile attention spans these days, acts have been pared down to 6 or 7 minutes—about the time between commercial breaks on kids' TV shows. Years ago, acts would go on for as long as 10 minutes.

A big part of the Felds' job is traveling the world to find fresh talent for each new circus, stuff that American audiences have never seen. That might involve visiting a circus festival in Budapest, a trip to China to scout acrobats and contortionists, or a quick jaunt to South America to check out a high-wire act.

Every year, too, the Felds are inundated with e-mailed video and Web site links from acts that want to be part of the circus.

"If we think something looks great on the video, we will hop on a plane and we will go to where those people are and we will see it live," Nicole Feld says. "Because sometimes it's not the same, sometimes it's better. And you also have to make sure it's something they can do on a consistent basis, and they have the personality, the excitement and passion for performing."

This year, everyone is buzzing about a troupe of seven Ukrainian acrobats who bounce around on oversized rubber inner tubes, turning flips and tumbling to and from each other's shoulders. It's fast, colorful and amazing.

Getting the young people and their reluctant parents to agree to have the circus whisk them far away from home was no easy feat. One of the troupe's leaders, 21-year-old Sergii Temkaiev, says they knew very little about life in America but realized that getting into the cast of the Ringling Bros. circus was joining the big leagues.

Tim Holst, a Feld Entertainment executive who's been scouting talent for more than two decades, says it's gotten harder to find unique performers who are willing to sign on for as many as a dozen shows a week for two grueling years. Used to be, circus schools in the former Soviet bloc countries produced performers that would jump at the chance.

Circus officials declined to say what performers are paid.

"As the world changes and there are other opportunities for young people, you've got to find that right person who has the vision of seeing their work in the circus atmosphere," says the 60-year-old Holst, who started with Ringling Bros. 36 years ago as a clown. "I think people want an easier lifestyle now, maybe they don't want to work as hard."

■ ■ ■

Three weeks later, on opening night in a Tampa hockey arena, Tinkham watches from the stands like a proud mama, as Raffo is lifted by her hair at just the right moment, the motorcyles roar past and all the performers stay out of each other's way during the opening number that is way more colorful, sparkly and bombastic than in rehearsals.

"It was overwhelming," she says.

Now back at home in Los Angeles, Tinkham has a couple, more traditional music projects in the works, but she says she'd join the circus again in a minute. That can't happen too soon for her kids. Her 9-year-old son talked about it so much at school that his teacher had to tell him to stop.

"The other kids were getting sad that their mommies didn't get to make a circus over Christmas," she says.

AP
Tim Holst, a Feld Entertainment executive, shown Dec. 11, 2007 at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa, Fla., has been scouting talent for Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus for more than two decades.

Rag & Bone are serious about NY fashion

AP

Actress Julianne Moore,left, and model Giselle Bundchen attend the Rag & Bone 2008 Fall Collection during Fashion Week, Friday, Feb. 1, 2008, in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—Rag & Bone declared itself as a serious New York Fashion Week player with a fall collection that was equally somber and stylish.

The label, known mostly for its denim just a few seasons ago, showed serious clothes for men and women on Friday—clothes worthy of the buzz designers David Neville and Marcus Wainwright have been generating and of their up-and-comer award last year from the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

A packed house that included Gisele Bundchen and Julianne Moore saw a parade of gray, black and navy clothes on the runway at midtown Cipriani that seemed loosely military-inspired, but the look was more a retro Russian style than that of a modern-day soldier.

One of the best men's looks was a Navy officer's coat worn with a slim cashmere trouser, while a great women's outfit was a black wool duffel coat worn with a black silk tie-tuxedo shirt and a jodphur-style legging.

A fitted "cigarette" minidress with chunky black beads forming a vertical stripe down the front and back was one of the few pieces with any adornment, really making an impact,

The female models wore berets on their heads in that chic way that French women do it without seeming costume-y at all.

The designers made clear, though, that their commitment is to the local fashion industry and nowhere else with the phrase "Handmade in New York" beamed on to the walls under its name. Neville and Wainwright have been active in a campaign to keep manufacturing in the Garment District.

Breakthrough in striking writers talks

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A breakthrough in contract talks has been reached between Hollywood studios and striking writers and could lead to a tentative deal as early as next week, a person close to the ongoing negotiations said Saturday.

The two sides breached the gap Friday on the thorniest issues, those concerning compensation for projects distributed via the Internet, said the person, who requested anonymity because he were not authorized to speak publicly.

A second person familiar with the talks, also speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to comment publicly, said that significant progress had been made and a deal might be announced within a week.

The people did not provide specific details on the possible agreement. Major points of contention include how much and when writers are paid for projects delivered online after they've been broadcast on TV.

The studios have been insisting that programs be streamed online for a certain period, deemed promotional, during which writers would forgo residuals. When payment kicked in, the companies sought to limit it to a flat $1,200 fee, while the guild wanted a percentage of a distributor's revenue.

The Writers Guild of America did not immediately reply to a request for comment. The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, the trade group representing the studios, declined comment, citing a news blackout agreed to by both sides during the talks.

Guild leaders have said they are fighting for a piece of the future, reflecting the widespread belief that Internet-delivered entertainment fare would inevitably claim an increasing and perhaps even dominant market share.

Although work remains to be done on elements of the agreement, prospects for a deal appeared solid, said those close to the situation. The tentative agreement would have to be approved by a majority of guild members.

The guild, whose 3-month-old strike has brought the entertainment industry to a standstill, began informal talks with top media company executives Jan. 23 in an attempt to reach a new deal covering governing work for film, TV and digital media.

Negotiations between the guild and alliance negotiators collapsed Dec. 7 after the alliance demanded that proposals for unionization of animation and reality shows be taken off the table. The guild refused.

During the negotiations impasse, the Directors Guild of America began its own talks with studio chiefs and swiftly reached a tentative deal that was announced Jan. 17 and covered some of the digital media issues key to the writers guild.

Major studio executives called on the writers guild to begin informal talks, which essentially are standing in for formal negotiations, according to those familiar with the situation.

The guild extended its own olive branch before the informal talks started by withdrawing the reality-animation unionization proposal and by deciding to keep pickets away from the Grammy Awards. It has since decided to allow the music ceremony to proceed with full union support.

However, the fate of the Feb. 24 Academy Awards has remained in question, with the guild so far declining to grant its blessing to the show. A union refusal to cooperate with the Golden Globes decimated the ceremony, which was boycotted by supportive actors.

Oscar organizers and producers have vowed they will stage some type of show, with or without union support—but a writers guild deal would allow this ceremony to proceed in its full, star-studded glory, providing an invaluable promotional showcase for movie studios and their films.

Striking screenwriter documents Hollywood history—and lives it during strike

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Marc Norman set out to document the history of American screenwriting in his new book, "What Happens Next." Now, in the thick of the writers strike that has upended the entertainment industry, he is living the latest chapter.

A veteran screenwriter and Academy Award winner for 1998's "Shakespeare in Love," Norman is among a select group of film and TV writers serving as negotiating committee members for the Writers Guild of America.

As the walkout centering on the very contemporary issue of pay for Internet-delivered projects nears its fourth month, Norman has the advantage of viewing it from the perspective of long-ago labor battles.

From today back to the first stirrings of unionism in early 20th-century Hollywood, when organizers had to meet in secret, "writers have never gotten anything without a fight and without going to the wall," Norman said.

He spoke to The Associated Press before the guild and major studio executives began informal talks Jan. 23 in an effort to re-start stalled negotiations.

While "What Happens Next," a treasure trove for film buffs, touches on previous clashes between writers and their bosses, those are subplots to the book's main narrative.

Norman wanted to create a work useful to writers: not the sort of screenwriting "how-to" guides that fill the shelves of mall bookstores, but a nuanced look at how prominent wordsmiths approached their craft and careers.

"To me, the value of the book is here are maybe 60 screenwriters over 100 years, and here's their response to the work they were called on to do" and how they reconciled their artistic goals with the industry's demands, Norman said.

"Screenwriters have to do that _ actors, directors, anybody with talent, has to figure out what they're going to do for the business and what they're going to do for themselves."

He considers his book a kind of "hidden history" because of the lack of attention to American screenwriting's roots and evolution.

"What Happens Next" (Harmony Books) opens not with a writer as hero but a very cinematic description of D.W. Griffith in action, directing a location shot for the politically charged (then and now) "Birth of a Nation," described by Norman as "the first American blockbuster."

"In 1914, movies had been around for twenty-four years," Norman writes. "America's greatest director is making the greatest American film to date, and there's no screenplay."

The book goes on to detail cinema's rapid rise and how specific writers found, or failed to find, their place in this unprecedented new world blending business, art and technology.

Among the fabled people he sketches are female pioneers Anita Loos and Frances Marion; novelists F. Scott Fitzgerald and William Faulkner; singular voices Billy Wilder and Preston Sturges; and recent stars like George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola.

The Oscar-winning Dalton Trumbo, whose credits included "Roman Holiday" and "Spartacus," won Norman's admiration for battling the entrenched industry blacklist of the 1950s that derailed the careers of writers suspected of pro-communist activity or sympathies.

"He's the one person who causes me to ask myself, `Could I have done that, could I have been that strong, could I have stood up to evil that well?' That's why he has meaning," said Norman, who, for the record, adds: "I don't think he was that great a writer."

How did Norman decide which men and women to spotlight? "Each one was representative of a certain period in which that writers succeeded because of their talents and because of the particular Hollywood system in play."

It was a system that the earliest scribes generally didn't value—and which in turn evinced little regard for them.

"The generation of screenwriters who came to Hollywood between the 1920s and the '50s didn't think much of the work," Norman said.

"They really had set out to write plays or novels and had fallen into this kind of work because they couldn't write a good play or novel, or because it was the Depression and they needed money or because there was just too much money to turn down here."

That attitude stands in sharp contrast to the modern screenwriters, who grew up with the big-screen art form firmly entrenched.

"Those coming on in the 1950s and after never knew a time without movies and never saw it as a second-class form of entertainment or literature," he said. "People were very turned on by movies, by the possibilities of movies, and wanted to do good work in that field."

Celebs heat up Maxim Super Bowl party

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)—It wasn't what you would call a hot party. Sure, there was sizzlin' music, plenty of drinks and stars like Nick Lachey and Ryan Seacrest in attendance, but with temperatures dipping into the 30s Friday night, many partygoers at Maxim's mostly outdoor Super Bowl soiree at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess huddled around heat lamps and fire pits.

And getting into one of the Super Bowl's most exclusive events was like going on a ride at a theme park: lots of lines, lots of patience.

Non-chauffeured guests were required to park in a carnival-like lot next to the resort, trek to a large white tent in another parking lot, enter a line where employees guarded the guest list, get a wristband, haul up to the hotel itself and then have the wristband verified with a flashlight by a security guard at the entrance.

Once inside, attendees sipped cocktails made with Patron Tequila, drank Heineken beer, mingled with scantily clad models posing in Perry Ellis garments and watched go-go dancers gyrate next to DJs on two outdoor stag-

AP

Model Cindy Crawford looks on husband Rande Gerber does an interview at the Maxim Magazine party and grand opening of the Stone Rose Lounge at The Fairmont Princess Hotel, Friday, Feb.1, 2008 in Scottsdale, Ariz.

One 'Hannah' screening nearly empty

NEW YORK (AP)—The "Hannah Montana" concert movie may be the hottest ticket in town—but early on opening day, at least one Manhattan theater was virtually tween-free.

The Ziegfield theater was mostly empty Friday morning for its first screening of "Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert," a 3-D film version of the sell-out tour. It had a good excuse: School was in session and a chilly downpour threatened to keep moviegoers away.

At least three Hannah-crazed fans braved the elements—and skipped school, too—for a chance to see their idol on the big screen. After the 74-minute show, 12-year-old pals Sydney Schindler and Danielle Kahn, and Danielle's 9-year-old sister Jenna, could barely contain their excitement.

"I liked it when she would, like, stick out the microphone and it would look like you were there in the audience right there," said Danielle, who hails from Bayside, N.Y.

"I liked it when her background dancers picked her up," Jenna said, to which Sydney added: "I liked it all."

Jaclyn Schindler, the girls' chaperone and Sydney's mom, said she rushed to buy tickets in advance since the girls couldn't get tickets to see the live tour. She said she was surprised she liked the film so much, and now understands what all the fuss is about.

O'Connell: Break up Boston's sports monopoly

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona (AP)—Jerry O'Connell is sick of Boston and it's not just because he's a New Yorker.

The New England Patriots, who go into Sunday's National Football League championship game against the New York Giants with a perfect record, are another example of Boston's recent dominance in sports. The Red Sox are baseball's World Series champs, the Celtics have the best record in basketball, and the Bruins are one of the top teams in hockey.

"I'm sick of Boston winning so much. It's like a monopoly," the actor told The Associated Press on Saturday as he partied with friends at Maxim magazine's sprawling pre-Super Bowl party.

O'Connell, who stars in ABC's comedy "Carpoolers," jokingly called for some serious intervention if Boston's teams monopolize all sports championships.

"It looks like the Celtics are going to win the season as well," O'Connell said. "If the Boston Bruins, the NHL team, wins, the federal government has to break them up. They have to take a team away—they have to."

Even though O'Connell's team is the underdog, he thinks The Giants have a shot at busting up Boston's winning streak to claim the championship title.

"I think it's going to take everything they have but I think they can win," he said. "It's going to be difficult but I would like to see them win—I think it would be a great story."

O'Connell starred in NBC TV's "Crossing Jordan." His screen credits include "Stand by Me" and "Jerry Maguire."

Partygoers were bottlenecked at the two entrances to the Stone Rose Lounge, nightclub mogul Rande Gerber's lush bar overlooking the pool. Guards ushered people away from the event's only indoor space.

Even celebrities like brothers Jerry and Charlie O'Connell had trouble gaining access.

"I came in with that guy, my father," said Jerry O'Connell, pointing at his dad standing on the other side of the lounge's glass exterior. "He's a VIP—and I'm out here," he said jokingly of his non-celebrity father.

Other stars at the Maxim party included Tom Petty, Sean "Diddy" Combs, John Elway, Larry David, Rob Schneider, Kim Kardarshian, Heidi Montag and Spencer Pratt from "The Hills," former "Dancing with the Stars" contestants Stacy Kiebler, Ian Ziering and Mario Lopez, and cast members from "Entourage."

'Gordo' comic creator dies at age 90

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Cartoonist Gus Arriola, whose long-running "Gordo" was one of the first syndicated comic strips to celebrate Hispanic culture, died Saturday following a lengthy illness, according to his publicist. He was 90.

Arriola, who had suffered from Parkinson's disease for some time, died at home in Carmel with his wife, Mary Frances, by his side, according to publicist Alan Richman.

Arriola, who was born in Arizona but of Mexican-American descent, started drawing "Gordo" in 1941.

His strip about a bean farmer-turned-tour guide who taught Americans about life south of the border ran for 44 years in as many as 270 newspapers. He retired in 1995.

Fellow cartoonists praised Arriola's skill as an artist and for helping to break down anti-Mexican stereotypes and educating readers about life in a neighboring country.

"He became an accidental ambassador. I didn't intend for him to be, but the readers made him that," Arriola said of his main character during a 2002 interview with The Associated Press.

"People would write and tell me that they went to Mexico because of reading about it in the strip," he said.

Early in his career, when Arriola worked as an animator for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's cartoon studio, his talent with pen and ink were put to use reinforcing the popular image of Mexican banditos, and his original incarnation of Gordo featured a lazy scoundrel taking siestas under a tree.

He remade the strip after a few readers complained that his work was a disservice to fellow Hispanics.

"I was going to do a Mexican Li'l Abner," Arriola said. "I was just going to be funny, then I realized that I'm depicting a real group of people here. I was caught, and I had to go with what I had created."

Arriola learned about Mexican culture from his father, who was born on a hacienda in the Mexican state of Sonora and from growing up as the youngest of nine children in Florence, Ariz., about 120 miles northwest of the border.

He would later recall that he learned to speak English by reading the Sunday funny pages.

Pregnant teen can no longer hide secret affair with pastor

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I have a big problem. I am 16 years old, have a good job and do well in school. I go to a Christian non-denominational church every Sunday and enjoy that, too.

The problem is my pastor. "Reverend Ron" is 48, married, and has children and grandchildren. We have become attracted to each other and have secretly become a couple since last fall.

Every Monday night, after I get off work, I go over to my church and meet Reverend Ron in his office where we have sex. We agreed to tell no one, so as not to shame ourselves or our families.

Six weeks ago, I found out I was pregnant. I haven't told him yet, and we continue with our Monday night meetings. Abortion is not an option, but neither is shaming my family, much less the whole church. Abby, what do I do?

IN TRUE LOVE IN WASHINGTON

DEAR IN TRUE LOVE: The first thing you must do is tell your mother what you have told me. If there is any "shaming," it should not be directed at you, your family or your church. You are 16, idealistic and inexperienced. "Reverend Ron," however, is an adult who has literally abused his "sacred" trust to you, his congregation and his God. He had so little concern for your welfare that he didn't even use birth control. This is not how grown men show "true love."

You cannot hide this secret forever. At some point the truth will be revealed. Tell your mother now, so responsible adults who love you can give you the support you so desperately need. If you're afraid to speak to your mother alone, then have a friend with you when you do it. The only thing you CANNOT do is remain silent.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My family is protesting a request I have made regarding the birth of my first child. I would prefer that my husband and I be alone with our newborn for at least the first 24 hours after the baby is born. I would like to contact my family the day after to invite them to the hospital.

Both our families can be very loud, as I witnessed firsthand last week when my sister-in-law had her first child. There were at least 20 relatives in her room after her C-section. It became so loud at one point that the nurse had to ask everyone to either leave the room or keep their voices at a moderate level.

I also saw how overbearing my mother was with my sister when she had her son several years ago. Mom says I'm "taking this experience away" from her, but I don't think it's her experience. It's my husband's and my experience. I truly feel it will be more peaceful if it's just my husband, me and our baby that first day. My husband has agreed to go along with whatever I request, but I know he'd prefer his family be present. Your thoughts, please?

NO VISITORS IN LOUISIANA

DEAR NO VISITORS: Your reasons for wanting peace, quiet, rest and time to recuperate are valid, and you should communicate them to your obstetrician and the nurses at the maternity ward -- just in case news of your labor and delivery "slips out" prematurely. While I understand your husband's wish to have his family present, unless he's willing to undergo the procedure in your place, he should not only respect your wishes but make sure they are carried out.

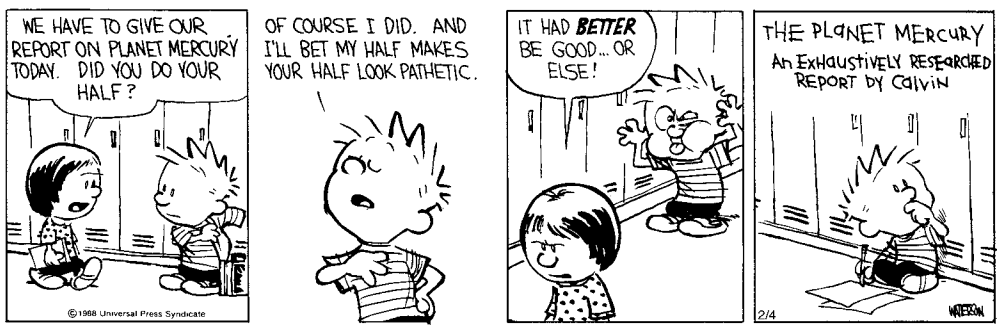
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

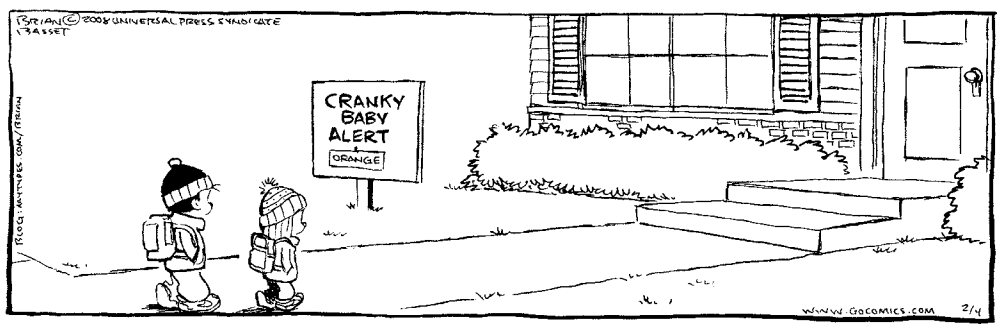

WE HAVE TO GIVE OUR REPORT ON PLANET MERCURY TODAY. DID YOU DO YOUR HALF?
©1988 Universal Press Syndicate
OF COURSE I DID. AND I'LL BET MY HALF MAKES YOUR HALF LOOK PATHETIC.
IT HAD BETTER BE GOOD... OR ELSE!
THE PLANET MERCURY
An Exhaustively Researched Report by Calvin
2/4
WATTERSON

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

BARK GRR... BARK BARK YAP BARK
Glenn McCoy
© 2004 Glenn McCoy Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate
2/4
YAP! YAP! WOOF! BARK BARK BARK!
OKAY. WHAT'D I SAY THAT TIME?
GIVE IT A REST, ENO.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

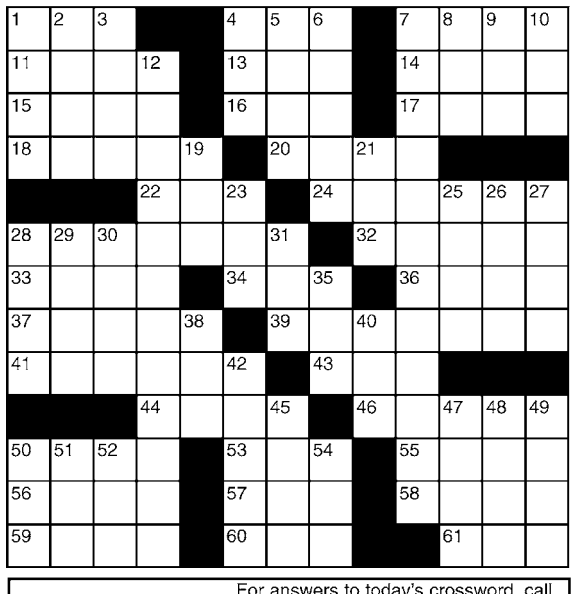
ACROSS
1 Matterhorn, for one
4 Stir-fry vessel
7 Engrossed
11 Yeses' cancelers
13 Ostrich-like bird
14 Loosen
15 Beige
16 Auction action
17 Command to Fido
18 Egg-beating tool
20 Throw
22 Intend
24 Oration
28 Marked by a rancher
32 First Greek letter
33 Branch
34 Wrigley product
36 Slender
37 Poppy derivative
39 Tonsorial artists
41 Tried
43 Small legume
44 Film fragment
46 Sleazy one (Sl.)
50 Especially
53 Doggy doc
55 Great Lake
56 Tom Joad, e.g.
57 Bonfire residue
58 Depend (on)
59 Have on
60 Pigpen
61 DDE's opponent

DOWN
1 From the start
2 Ness or Lomond
3 "Frasier" actress Gilpin
4 "Charlotte's —"
5 Leave out
6 Praise
7 Pulitzer-winning New York Times columnist
8 Pismire
9 Handheld organizer, for short
10 Plaything
12 Four-time Iditarod winner
19 Tease
21 Resort
23 "Little Women" woman
25 Duel tool
26 Burn somewhat
27 — Christian Andersen
28 Rorschach picture
29 Mature
30 Writer Kingsley
31 Fix the soundtrack
35 Chart
38 Blanc or Brooks
40 In medias —
42 Prima donnas
45 Nuisance
47 Neighborhood
48 Cleopatra's river
49 Jailer's janglers
50 Scatter seed
51 Guitar's kin
52 Spy org.
54 "Honor — father ..."

Solution time: 24 mins.

■	B	R	O	I	L	■	P	I	L	A	R	■
P	L	E	N	T	Y	■	A	N	A	D	E	M
L	A	P	E	L	S	■	J	O	C	O	S	E
A	M	P	■	L	O	R	A	N	■	B	O	A
Z	E	E	S	■	L	A	M	■	N	E	R	D
A	D	D	O	N	■	N	A	M	A	S	T	E
■	■	■	L	E	D	■	S	O	B	■	■	■
R	A	D	I	O	E	D	■	P	O	P	P	A
O	V	I	D	■	S	U	E	■	B	O	O	B
B	E	V	■	O	I	N	K	S	■	N	I	B
I	D	I	O	M	S	■	I	O	D	I	N	E
N	O	N	F	A	T	■	N	I	N	E	T	Y
■	N	E	A	R	S	■	G	L	A	S	S	■

Saturday's answer 2-4



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Brandon "Bug" Hall, 23; Natalie Imbruglia, 33; Oscar De La Hoya, 35; Alice Cooper, 60

Happy Birthday: This year, you will have added determination, drive and precision. This is a great year for self-improvement, socializing, networking and getting on top of any legal issues, contractual dealings or partnership problems. Take the initiative and you will surprise your peers, friends and family. Your numbers are 10, 13, 19, 27, 30, 39

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Be careful with whom you share your thoughts. You will be questioned, so be prepared to back up your suggestions with facts. A trip to visit or a phone call to an old friend will give you some uplifting ideas. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Think outside the box and you will get much further ahead. If you count on someone for assistance, you will be let down. You can make some serious changes to your lifestyle and to your own well-being. Don't get angry, get busy. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You will have a good idea that you can turn into something of interest to colleagues, peers and family. An investment may be tempting but, before you jump in, make sure it is sound. Time is on your side. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): A partnership may need a little fine-tuning. Prepare to discuss your complaints or your ideas for improvement. Your experience and excellent memory will count. Compassion and understanding will also help you get your way. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You may be more inclined to deal with relationships and personal matters but you should be focusing on business and getting ahead. A serious meeting can help you find your ground regarding a project you want to pursue. Take the initiative. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Socializing and networking will lead to some important changes that have to do with personal or business relationships. You can make some vocational changes that will enhance what you know and do in the future. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't trust just anyone. You may need to look outside your immediate circle of friends and family if you want an honest answer. Self-improvement projects or traveling for the experience or information will turn out well. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): A personal investment can be made but don't share what you are doing with loved ones. A chance to move up professionally is apparent if you put in the hours and show your dedication to what you are trying to pursue. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Take your past into consideration and you will have a better chance at choosing what needs to be done today. Change isn't always necessary to get what you want. Think before you act and good results will follow. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Every cloud will have a silver lining when it comes to your getting what you want. Stand up for your rights, state your needs and formulate what you want in order to do what you are being asked to do. There is money to be made. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): The more you do for others, the more you will get in return today. Be the good Samaritan, the humanitarian and the one who is understanding and compassionate. Changes you want to make at home will turn out well. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Look beyond what's right in front of you and you will get a better picture of what you are up against. Someone you are close to may have a hidden agenda but don't get upset—it is likely to be to your benefit in the end. Focus on what you can do for others. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are industrious, ingenious and imaginative. You always react with confidence, making you a strong contender. You form strong partnerships.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8			7	9	5			1
		3		4		2		
	4						7	
7				1				8
6	5		8		4		1	9
3				5				2
	3						6	
		9		6		5		
4			2	3	9			7

Difficulty Level ★ 2/04

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	6	9	7	3	2	5	8	1
8	7	2	1	6	5	4	9	3
3	5	1	8	9	4	6	2	7
7	1	3	4	5	9	8	6	2
6	9	5	3	2	8	7	1	4
2	8	4	6	7	1	3	5	9
5	4	8	9	1	7	2	3	6
9	2	6	5	4	3	1	7	8
1	3	7	2	8	6	9	4	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/02

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

JAMES BLUNT — Solution: 6 letters

N	W	I	K	G	S	S	D	N	A	L	G	N	E	M
E	I	E	B	C	U	R	O	M	B	S	O	H	E	A
Y	N	A	V	I	A	I	U	F	P	S	S	O	N	R
R	D	A	P	I	Z	B	T	O	T	I	L	M	A	T
A	M	O	J	S	L	A	T	A	T	L	A	E	G	I
U	I	B	L	A	T	L	B	I	R	O	C	N	R	N
R	L	E	H	E	I	N	R	M	O	V	O	S	O	K
B	L	A	Y	G	M	B	E	M	I	E	V	I	E	B
E	S	U	H	A	I	P	E	M	U	R	S	H	M	R
F	E	T	G	D	L	H	E	V	U	S	A	(H)	O	A
F	L	I	N	D	A	P	I	R	E	R	(I)	M	T	V
O	R	F	I	L	A	D	O	R	R	(T)	T	C	I	E
L	A	U	S	C	E	C	P	O	(S)	Y	S	S	O	R
K	H	L	H	O	K	X	W	H	A	R	M	O	N	Y
A	C	A	M	R	E	T	I	R	W	G	N	O	S	I

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Album, Back, Batson, Beautiful, Bravery, British, Charles, Emotions, England, Expression, February, Folk, Guitar, Harmony, Harrow, High, Hits, Home, Ibiza, Instruments, Jane, Kosovo, Linda, Live, Lover, Marimba, Martin, Melody, Music, Organ, Pacha, Perry, Piano, Play, Rock, Sing, Soft, Songwriter, Spain, Spotlight, Steve, Tours, Video, Vocals, Windmill

Last Saturday's Answer: Dinosaurs

To order **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 16, 22, 23, 24, 25 or 26**, send $5.95 each (US funds only) payable to Universal Press Syndicate plus $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to WONDERWORD, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-6734, ext. 6888. Order online at upuzzles.com. (Contain 43 puzzles, 9 of which are the larger, 20 x 20 size)

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT RESIDENTIAL

Apartment For Rent (in Beach Road, Garapan) One (1) Bedroom fully furnished with back-up generator and 24 hour water, washer & dryer facilities in the building. For inquiries, pls. call 322-6183

House for lease, 53+ years. Newly renovated 2BR/1BA in Fina Sisu near NMC. Asking $115K. Contact Scott or Melinda Crockett, 234-5260 or 788-1834. Call for appointment.

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR (M 6172)
Salary:$3.85/hour. Benefits: Self arranges housing; self provided food; medical & worksmen compensation provided by ER. Contact: Marianas Repairs Co., Inc. @234-9083.

---

1 CASHIER (M 6173)
Salary:$3.55-$4.00/hour. Benefits: Workman's compensation & medical provided. Contact: AFH, Inc. @234-6269.

---

1 HOUSEWORKER (M 6174)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Live out housing; 1 meal free & medical. Contact: Josephine C. Balicanta @234-0740.

---

1 SALES MANAGER (M 6175)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Medical benefits & workers compensation. Contact: RK CNMI Inc. @233-0569.

---

3 MASSEUSE/MASSEUR (M 6176)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Medical benefits & workers compensation. Contact: Sterling Corporation @233-7766.

---

1 ASST. MANAGER (M 6177)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & worksman compensation. Contact: Halal Corp. CNMI dba Marianas Telecom @233-9457.

---

1 ARTIST (M 6178)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation & bonding. Contact: EQ Const. Corporation dba Saipan Arts & Signs @234-8827.

---

1 HOUSEWORKER (M 6179)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; ER provide food & medical employer provided. Contact: Remedio C. Matagolai @664-1250.

---

1 MASSEUSE/MASSEUR (M 6180)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; employee provided food; self arranged transportation; workmen's compensation & medical expense. Contact: Elena R. Delos Santos dba Savannah's Massage and SPA @235-2847.

WHATZIT Solution:
Buffalo Bill

---

1 COOK HELPER (M 6181)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Health insurance & workmen's compensation. Contact: Barbara Reyes dba Dr. Jack's Rest. @256-3020.

2 WAITER/WAITRESS (M 6182)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Health insurance & workmen's compensation. Contact: Barbara Reyes dba Dr. Jack's Rest. @256-3020.

Commercial Space & Room for Rent

- 4000 sq.ft. commercial space, good for warehouse (previously rented to Mingli Wholesale), auto-shop, day-care, office, etc. Located in Chalan Laulau between Middle Rd. & Beach Rd. Back of Triple J Auto.
- Room from $80-$140/mo. behind Triple J Auto on Beach Rd. near to XO Market & H-Mart.

Call Ivan @ 235-0479, 285-9966, 9:00am - 6:00pm

$200 REWARD FOR LOST WALLET

Brown wallet lost within the vicinity of Tony Roma's, Garapan on January 25, 2008 around 5 a.m. Important documents like entry permit (#156077) and drivers license (#12222003) needed to be returned to owner. Reward of $200 will be given. No questions asked.

If found or any information, please call 285-4469.

***NEW* Rattan Furniture FOR SALE**
Expensive material
Call 235-4791, 433-9616, 285-7446

DANILO T. AGUILAR, F0198
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 505301
First Floor, San Jose Court Bldg.
Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way
San Jose, Saipan, MP 96950
TELEPHONE: (670) 234-8801
FAX: (670) 234-1251

Attorney for Plaintiff
BMW CORPORATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BMW CORPORATION, Plaintiff, v. AB KON CO. and JAY KIM, in his capacity as Company President, Defendant.	CIVIL CASE NO. 07-0313 **SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION.**

TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANT: AB KON CO.

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given to you herewith, within thirty (30) days after the service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Law Offices of Danilo T. Aguilar, whose address is P.O. Box 505301, First Floor San Jose Court Bldg., Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way, San Jose, Saipan MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of Court at the Guma Hustisia, Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of the Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment of default may be taken against you for the relief in the complaint.

By order of this Court.

/s/ Clerk of Courts
Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands

Dated this 30th day of November, 2007.

DANILO T. AGUILAR, F0198
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 505301
First Floor, San Jose Court Bldg.
Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way
San Jose, Saipan, MP 96950
TELEPHONE: (670) 234-8801
FAX: (670) 234-1251

Attorney for Plaintiff
BMW CORPORATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BMW CORPORATION, Plaintiff, v. AB KON CO. and JAY KIM, in his capacity as Company President, Defendant.	CIVIL CASE NO. 07-0313 **SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION.**

TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANT: JAY KIM

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given to you herewith, within thirty (30) days after the service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Law Offices of Danilo T. Aguilar, whose address is P.O. Box 505301, First Floor San Jose Court Bldg., Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way, San Jose, Saipan MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of Court at the Guma Hustisia, Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of the Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment of default may be taken against you for the relief in the complaint.

By order of this Court.

/s/ Clerk of Courts
Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands

Dated this 13th day of December, 2007.

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
Announcement No. 08-002

POSITION TITLE: Marketing Manager
ANNUAL SALARY: $40,000.00 - $50,000.00**
***Salary will commensurate with qualifications*
LOCATION: Saipan, CNMI
OPENING DATE: January 28, 2008
CLOSING DATE: February 11, 2008
Applications must be submitted by 5:00pm on the closing date.

Minimum Qualification Requirements: Any combination equivalent to a graduate from a recognized college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing, with two (2) years of marketing experience and two (2) years of supervisory experience. Applicant must have good communication skills (verbal and written) and must be proficient with using Microsoft Office software. Applicants may be required to take a written test as part of the application process. All applicants must be a U.S. citizen or an I.R. citizen of the CNMI. Copies of identification are required upon submission of application.

HOW TO APPLY: Interested persons may contact the Marianas Visitors Authority Office at (670) 664-3200/01 or by emailing personnel@mymarianas.com for an employment application form. A completed application should be submitted together with the required documents to complete the application process no later than the closing date of this announcement. Failure to submit all the required documentation will not be considered.

MVA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Subscribe to CNMI's First Daily Newspaper
235-NEWS

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

bison beak

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Find today's solution in this section

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*

• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1

Combo (Print and Online)*

• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2

Radio (KCNM/KZMI)

• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

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Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

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REFUNDS

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Patriots go for fourth Super Bowl title

AP

New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick speaks at a news conference at the Phoenix Convention Center Friday, Feb. 1, 2008, in Phoenix.

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)—This one is for history.

No longer can the New England Patriots ignore it. Beat the New York Giants on Sunday and it means more than winning a fourth Super Bowl in seven years. More than reaffirming their dynasty in a sport designed to even the playing field.

It means staking an undeniable claim to that most elusive of titles: greatest ever.

"I think it's the biggest game of all of our lives - my life, the entire team, our coaches," said Tom Brady, the NFL's Most Valuable Player and the Patriots' poster boy for perfection. "We're going to be remembering this game for as long as we live, win or lose. We're going to have great memories of this experience, or we're going to look at it truly as a missed opportunity. There's not too many teams in the history of the NFL—none, in fact—that have been 18-0 going into this game."

The pursuit of an unbeaten season, surpassing the 17-0 by the 1972 Miami Dolphins that stands alone atop the pro football pantheon of unblemished excellence, has turned this Super Bowl into even more of a must-see or must-attend event. Resale tickets for the first title game in Arizona since 1996 are going for thousands of dollars above face value. TV ratings are expected to challenge the highest for any game.

All those elements make this game quite an attraction—as if a matchup between two teams that played a 38-35 season finale isn't enticing enough.

Throw in all the passing records set by Brady, receiving marks established by Randy Moss, the prospect of another shootout with a fearless opponent that has won 10 straight road games, and it's enough to make even the casual fan salivate.

Not to mention the whole Spygate affair after the season opener that effectively cast a shadow on many of Bill Belichick's achievements as Patriots coach.

The Patriots are aware of the historical significance of 19-0. And of 18-1.

"It's the biggest game of my life because it's the Super Bowl," said Moss, who was traded to New England last spring after years of productivity and controversy in Minnesota and Oakland. "With everything we have at stake, as far as hopefully saving the undefeated season, it is right to say that."

It's also something they've pretended didn't exist throughout the first 17 wins. When they edged the Giants to finish the unbeaten regular season, they took the one-game-at-a-time mantra to exceedingly more boring heights. Same thing after the divisional playoff victory against Jacksonville.

Then, despite Brady injuring his ankle, the Patriots won the AFC title against San Diego. Only after that, and in the days leading to America's biggest sports party, did the players begin mentioning history. Or, as 18-year veteran linebacker Junior Seau put it, "EVER."

"As far as the Super Bowl goes, yeah, this is the Super Bowl, but this is a special Super Bowl," Seau said. "We can hide from the fact that there's going to be another Super Bowl, but this special day, this special week, we can do something that can be here forever."

As for 19-0 having a bearing on their performance, Seau said no way.

"Thinking about it isn't going to do us any good," Seau said. "We are trying to focus on making it a reality, and that's more important than hypothetically or dramatizing it. Because until we get out there on Sunday and go ahead and prove that we can embrace and sustain it and can take advantage of our opportunity, it's meaningless."

Meaningless perhaps to Seau and the other players in the game, but not to the general public. The Patriots' saga might be better dubbed a soap opera. It has included Spygate and the subsequent fines and stripping of a first-round draft choice; accusations of running up the score; claims by opponents that some of them, notably safety Rodney Harrison and tackle Matt Light, play dirty; and Brady's sore ankle, which was first captured on film while he was visiting his supermodel girlfriend in New York the day after the AFC championship game.

As if all that wasn't juicy enough, throw in the perfection part.

Oh, and then there's the Giants, Hey, there were only 10-6 during the regular season, a wild card in the clearly inferior NFC. Plus, they blew a 12-point third-quarter lead at home in losing to New England on Dec. 29.

The last thing they want to be a bit player in the Patriots' coronation. They believe the winner on Sunday will be the two-touchdown underdog with the "other brother," Eli Manning, at quarterback.

Wide receiver Plaxico Burress even predicted the final score: 23-17.

"It's all entertainment. We're all having fun with it," Burress said. "The prediction has gotten so much play ... we can still laugh about it and have fun with it. That was one of the things that made Muhammad Ali great."

And The Greatest—something the Patriots might be able to say they are come Sunday night.

Patriots, NFL deny new spying allegation

PHOENIX (AP)—A member of the New England Patriots' video staff taped the St. Louis Rams' last walkthrough before the 2002 Super Bowl, a Boston newspaper reported Saturday. The NFL, however, said it was satisfied this was not another Spygate.

"We were aware of the rumor months ago and looked into it. There was no evidence of it on the tapes or in the notes produced by the Patriots, and the Patriots told us it was not true," NFL spokesman Greg Aiello told The Associated Press.

Citing an unidentified source, the Boston Herald reported that a Patriots employee recorded the Rams' walkthrough at the Superdome in the New Orleans a day before the Super Bowl. New England beat the heavily favored Rams 20-17 its first NFL title.

The Herald reported that a source close to the Patriots in the 2001 season said the team held a walkthrough at the Superdome in New Orleans before the game on Feb. 3, 2002. After the Patriots took a team picture, a member of their video department stayed inside the stadium and taped the Rams' session.

It was not known whether the cameraman was told by the Patriots to film the practice or what he did with the tape, the Herald said. The Rams were two-touchdown favorites, but lost on Adam Vinatieri's last-second field goal.

"The suggestion that the New England Patriots recorded the St. Louis Rams' walkthrough on the day before Super Bowl XXXVI is absolutely false. Any suggestion to the contrary is untrue," Patriots spokesman Stacey James told the AP.

Rams spokesman Rick Smith, reading a statement from team president John Shaw, said, "At this point, we have no comment."

The unbeaten Patriots will try to win their fourth Super Bowl in seven seasons Sunday when they play the New York Giants.

Redskins' Monk, Green elected to Hall

PHOENIX (AP)—Like the two old friends they are, Darrell Green and Art Monk chatted about the latest news in their lives: making the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Never mind that thousands of people were listening to the conference call after Saturday's announcement. This was simply two former Washington Redskins sharing verbal hugs after receiving the sport's highest honor.

"May I just say to you when I first came to Washington, you had just won the Super Bowl, you guys worked me over for nine weeks and I hated all of you," Green told Monk, drawing laughter.

"I appreciate your words," Monk told Green, who covered Monk in practices for years. "I was trying to hear some of the comments that you made and I feel the same way. "

For the second straight year, former commissioner Paul Tagliabue failed to elected.

Other players joining Green and Monk included New England linebacker Andre Tippett, San Diego/San Francisco defensive end Fred Dean, Minnesota/Denver tackle Gary Zimmerman and senior committee choice, Kansas City cornerback Emmitt Thomas.

Monk finally was chosen in his eighth year of eligibility. He concluded his career after the 1995 season with Philadelphia, but spent 13 years with the Redskins as one of the NFL's premier receivers. Monk held records for most consecutive games with a reception (164) and career catches (820). Both have been surpassed, but Monk didn't play in as wide-open an era on offense as many other receivers. He was one of the most consistent possession and third-down receivers in the league throughout his 14 pro seasons.

"Whether I deserved to play in the NFL or deserve even to be in Hall of Fame, I just loved the game, loved to play, loved being out there," Monk said.

Green, one of the NFL's speediest and most skilled cornerbacks for two decades, spent his entire career (1983-2002) with the Redskins. He holds the record for consecutive seasons with an interception (19), and had 54 picks for 621 yards and six TDs. A member of the 1990s All-Decade team, Green made seven Pro Bowls.

"This is incredible. This is so special," Green said when informed of the vote. "This is out of this world. This literally transcends football, everything I have gone through to do what I was able to do. It was more than the ability to run and cover. It just goes so far beyond that."

The other player in his first year of eligibility, receiver Cris Carter, was not elected. Carter finished his 15-year career second on the career list in receptions and TD catches.

Inductions will be at the Pro Football Hall of Game in Canton, Ohio on Aug. 2.

"I looked forward to the day we are going to Canton," Green said, breaking up with emotion. "Hopefully, there are several hundred thousand hotels there, and several hundred thousand tickets."

Perhaps the most surprising outcome was that Tagliabue, again, did not get enough support.

In his 17 years as commissioner, the NFL experienced no labor stoppages, while its revenues from TV contracts skyrocketed. There also were expansions to Jacksonville, Charlotte, Cleveland and Houston under his watch, and several teams moved into new stadiums, many of them built with public funds.

But many, including some reporters on the 44-member selection committee, found Tagliabue unapproachable and uncooperative.

Also failing to get in were Redskins guard Russ Grimm, Buffalo Bills receiver Andre Reed, Oakland Raiders punter Ray Guy, Denver Broncos linebacker Randy Gradishar, Chicago Bears defensive end Richard Dent, Miami Dolphins guard Bob Kuechenberg, Vikings guard Randall McDaniel, and Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Derrick Thomas.

Senior committee nominee Marshall Goldberg was not elected, either.

Tippett, who is in town as the Patriots' director of community affairs, was considered the best linebacker in the AFC during an era when Lawrence Taylor ruled the other conference. An outstanding pass rusher who also could handle coverage, Tippett was a force against the run after a stint in junior college and a standout career at Iowa.

"This is by far the proudest moment of my professional football career," said Tippett, who made the NFL's 1980s All-Decade team and waited 10 years for this day. "I will be joining the greats of the game and I am deeply honored."

Although he weighed only 230, Dean was a fearsome pass rusher because of his speed and agility; blockers struggled to get their hands on him. He starred with the Chargers from 1975-81, then with the 49ers from 1981-85.

"All I can say is thank you. I am trying to get my heart in order, it's still racing," Dean said.

Zimmerman was a standout for the Vikings from 1986-92 and the Broncos from 1993-97, winning a Super Bowl in his final season. He made his reputation in the USFL before joining Minnesota.

"I am in shock right now," Zimmerman said.

Thomas, who also was Green's position coach for years in Washington, was a superb bump-and-run and coverage cornerback for the Chiefs from 1966-78. He was the interim coach of the Falcons at the end of the 2007 season and has been retained as an assistant by new coach Mike Smith.

Thomas was thrilled with the company he is keeping, most specifically Green and Monk.

"Those guys have high character. I'm proud to go in with them."

Yao's Rockets beat Yi's Bucks, 91-83

MILWAUKEE (AP)—The second edition of Yao vs. Yi didn't live up to its billing, as Yao Ming's Houston Rockets beat Yi Jianlian's Milwaukee Bucks 91-83 in the NBA on Saturday.

Both of China's biggest basketball exports had quiet nights.

Yao scored 12 points and added 12 rebounds for Houston, sitting out much of the first half after getting in early foul trouble and injuring his ankle just before halftime.

Yi scored six points, below the rookie's average of 9.7 per game.

Jazz 110, Grizzlies 91

In Memphis, Tennessee, Utah extended its winning streak to eight games by beating a diminished Memphis.

Carlos Boozer had 19 points and 10 rebounds and Deron Williams had 16 points and 11 assists for the Jazz, which has won 12 of its past 13 to sit atop the Northwest Division.

Memphis lost its third consecutive game, and got a glimpse of what the rest of the season might be like without team leader Pau Gasol, who was traded to the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday.

Cavaliers 98, Clippers 84

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 28 points after missing a game with a sprained ankle, leading Cleveland over Los Angeles.

The Cavaliers are 0-6 without James this season and 26-14 with him.

The Clippers played their fourth straight game without leading scorers Corey Maggette and Chris Kaman, who were out with illness.

Nuggets 117, Bobcats 101

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony returned from an ankle injury to score 25 points and Denver beat Charlotte.

Allen Iverson added 24 points and 13 assists for the Nuggets, who won their eighth straight home game to remain just a game behind Utah in the Central Division.

Magic 121, Pacers 115

In Indianapolis, Orlando beat Indiana for its fourth straight victory.

Dwight Howard had 24 points and 12 rebounds for the Magic, which is now five games clear atop the Southeast Division.

The slumping Pacers dropped their sixth consecutive game.

AP

Milwaukee Bucks' Yi Jianlian, right, walks off the court with Houston Rockets' Yao Ming, after their NBA basketball game, Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008 in Milwaukee.

Hawks 104, Nets 92

In Atlanta, the home team ended a three-game losing streak by beating New Jersey.

Marvin Williams scored 24 points, while Josh Smith and Josh Childress each had 23 for the Hawks, who had dropped seven of eight.

The Hawks used a quick transition game to outscore the Nets 16-7 on fast-break points in the second half.

New Jersey dropped to 2-10 since Jan. 11.

SuperSonics 86, Knicks 85

In Seattle, Kevin Durant shook off another poor shooting night to score 21 points, including a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 59 seconds left, as Seattle beat New York.

It was the season-high third consecutive victory for the SuperSonics.

Seattle native Nate Robinson missed a 3-pointer with 1.9 seconds remaining that would have won it for the Knicks, who lost all five games on their road trip. They blew second-half leads in four of those defeats, including this one.

Robinson missed all nine of his shots and finished with five points, two assists and three turnovers in 32 minutes.

New York (14-33) sank to a season-low 19 games under .500.

Kings 105, Bulls 101

In Sacramento, California, Ron Artest scored 28 points to help Sacramento beat Chicago.

Kevin Martin had 26 for the Kings, who have won four straight and are the closest they've been to .500 since 10 games into the season.

The Bulls had just one field goal in the final 4:57 of the game and that came on a meaningless layup at the buzzer. They have lost nine straight road games.

Woods struggles as Els grabs Dubai lead

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Tiger Woods struggled Saturday and Ernie Els took advantage, surging into the lead of the Dubai Desert Classic with a 7-under 65.

That doesn't mean Els thinks he can sit on his one-shot lead over Henrik Stenson with Woods another three strokes back going into the final round.

"Probably need a really low one (score) tomorrow," Els said. "I can't see Henrik with Tiger and the other guys not shooting low, so just got to keep going tomorrow."

Woods, who led after the first two rounds, missed putts, hit wayward drives and yelled at a photographer en route to a 73. He is at 7-under 209 and tied for fifth with five others.

"I didn't play well today," said Woods, who opened his season with an eight-stroke win at the Buick Invitational last week for a fourth straight title. "I didn't hit the ball close enough on the greens, and consequently I was 'lag putting' a lot. Never really gave myself a lot of looks at birdies."

Els had a bogey-free round, nailing an eagle on the 10th and adding five birdies to rise from fifth to first at 11-under 205. The South African has won the Dubai three times, in 1994, 2002 and 2005.

Defending champion Stenson shot a 68. European Tour money leader Lee Westwood (68) and Graeme McDowell (69) are tied at third at 208.

Woods, who hit two birdies and two bogeys—including one on the last hole—found himself beyond the rough after several wayward drives landed in sand near the gallery.

The clicking cameras also bothered him. He yelled at one photographer at the eighth hole for taking a picture during his backswing off the tee. Woods' ball landed to the left of the course near some palm trees.

Marshals repeatedly had to tell the large gallery following Woods to put away their cameras and stand still. A few fans were ejected for not listening.

Afterward, Woods said the crowd and photographers were part of the sport.

"Just one of those things you have to deal with ... You just got to fight through it," he said. "I have to go out and play a good round of golf and play better than I have the last two days and obviously start making some putts."

Els was pleased with his third round—especially after he shot in a second-round 72 in gusty conditions.

"I hit the ball really nice. I hit a lot of fairways, a lot of greens," Els said.

Sunday's lineup reminded Stenson of last year's final round in Dubai—when Els was leading by two with the Swede in second and Woods in fifth. Stenson went on to win, Els took second and Woods third.

"It's always hard to defend a title, and I think especially this one will be hard. I'm very happy with the job I'm doing so far," said Stenson, who took second in Qatar and Abu Dhabi last month. "Hopefully, I can go out and play a solid round again."

Westwood said even with the top player in the mix anything was possible.

"Golf is funny. (Woods) wins by seven at his own tournament, eight last week ... leading by two after one day here, you'd think it's over and he's running away," he said. "But golf has a funny way of reining you in and just when you think you've got it, it bites you."

Tied with Woods in fourth were second-round runner-up Damien McGrane of Ireland (72); Sergio Garcia of Spain (70); Martin Kaymer of Germany (69); Peter Hedblom of Sweden (70) and Shiv Kapur of India (69).

Twins and Mets finalize Santana trade

NEW YORK (AP)—Johan Santana was right there in the room as his agent and the New York Mets haggled over a colossal contract. After three straight days of negotiating, the sides were $5 million apart—and time had run out.

Maybe this blockbuster trade between the Mets and Minnesota Twins was going to crumble, just as New York did during the pennant race last September.

"We talked about a worst-case scenario," Mets general manager Omar Minaya recalled, thinking of the team's eager fan base "What are we going to say?"

So agent Peter Greenberg and the Mets asked Minnesota for an extension, a request that was granted by the Twins and approved by the commissioner's office. The deadline for talks was pushed back two hours to 7 p.m. EST Friday, and that was enough time to reach a deal.

"Without that, we wouldn't have gotten it done," Greenberg said.

Santana passed his physical Saturday, finalizing the ballyhooed swap that sent him to New York for four prospects: outfielder Carlos Gomez and right-handers Philip Humber, Kevin Mulvey and Deolis Guerra.

"We've been lacking what we consider a true No. 1 starter," Minaya said on a conference call. "It doesn't get much better than Johan Santana."

After an offseason of shopping the two-time AL Cy Young Award winner, Minnesota considered hanging onto him. Without a new deal, Santana, who will turn 29 next month, could have become a free agent following this year's World Series. The Twins offered him an $80 million, four-year extension, but he turned it down.

"If we had not gotten an offer that we felt was acceptable, we would've kept Johan for the 2008 season," new Twins general manager Bill Smith said on a separate conference call. "I think it dragged on long enough. You want to get to a point where you can go into spring training knowing what you have. I think everybody just reached a point where we felt this was the best we were going to get."

The Mets and Twins announced the trade one day after Santana agreed to a $137.5 million, six-year contract with New York—record riches for a pitcher. With an option for a seventh season, the deal could be worth $157 million.

The left-hander gets $19 million this year, $20 million in 2009, $21 million in 2010, $22.5 million in 2011, $24 million in 2012 and $25.5 million in 2013, according to terms obtained by The Associated Press.

The Mets have a $25 million option for 2014 with a $5.5 million buyout, and the option could become guaranteed based on Santana's innings and finish in postseason award voting. Of each year's salary, including the option season, $5 million will be deferred.

As negotiations dragged on, the Mets thought it might help for Santana to meet owner Fred Wilpon and his son, Jeff, the club's chief operating officer. At first, the pitcher didn't want to travel to New York without an agreement in place, Greenberg said. But the Mets arranged a private plane for him, and Santana arrived at the SportsNet New York offices in Rockefeller Center, where talks took place.

"It took 74 hours of hard work, pretty much 24-7," Greenberg said. "We got creative. We tried to work together to make this happen. This was something that both sides wanted."

After each side moved substantially, the Mets were at $135 million and Greenberg at $140 million as Friday's original deadline approached.

"Usually, there's no clock in baseball," Jeff Wilpon said.

After the sides were given an extra two hours, the Mets announced about 30 minutes before the new deadline that negotiations had concluded.

"We would not have traded for him if we didn't go into that very confident that we were going to sign him. We knew what the expectations were," Jeff Wilpon said. "We clearly see signing him as a major event in our franchise's history."

The Mets planned a news conference to introduce Santana at Shea Stadium on Wednesday.

"He's extremely happy. We're all very happy," Greenberg said. "We're still kind of pinching ourselves to make sure this is really true. This is a match made in heaven."

The Yankees and Red Sox also pursued Santana this offseason, initially offering packages that included promising major league players. But those teams dropped out of the chase—just as Minaya anticipated.

Splendid boardwork gives Purefoods 2-1 edge

MANILA, Philippines—Purefoods tended the boards with authority, cashing heavily on it on the way to rebounding from its Game 2 defeat.

The Giants pummeled the Red Bull Barakos under the basket and pulled off a 99-90 victory to regain the upperhand after the third game of their 2007-08 Smart PBA Philippine Cup best-of-seven semifinal showdown at the Astrodome Friday night.

With a 2-1 lead and the momentum back on their side, the Giants seek to move in the threshold of the Finals in Game Four Sunday in the same venue.

"That's (rebounding) something we did consciously because their small men always lead out for the fastbreak. That enabled us to crash the boards and we drew tremendous power from it," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio.

The Giants terribly outrebounded the Barakos, 55-37, with Marc Pingris accounting for 19 and Jondan Salvador 11.

The dynamic duo of James Yap and Kerby Raymundo snared 14 rebounds together while also exploding for a combined output of 56 points.

The Giants regained the lead in the series yet Gregorio said they surely don't intend to relax.

"Playing Red Bull is always tough. You don't know what to expect and you can't celebrate a victory for long. You relax a bit and it could prove costly," said Gregorio.

"When you play Red Bull, people tend to think they don't have the talent. But they have Cyrus Baguio who's the best slasher in the league, Junthy Valenzuela who's an underrated No. 3 man and two big men (Mick Pennisi and Mike Hrabak) who can shoot the trey. Then there's coach Yeng Guiao. The reality is they're strong," Gregorio added.

The Giants, however, had the answers for all those Red Bull talents Friday night.

It was Red Bull which just couldn't find an antidote for the Yap-Raymundo combo and for Purefoods' tenacious rebounding.

Yap fired three triples and totaled 29 points while Raymundo rifled in two trifectas and finished with a total of 27 points.

Energized by Yap's and Raymundo's torrid shooting and Pingris' power off the boards, the Giants took the half at 51-43 and held on the finish.

The Barakos actually waged a rally in the fourth largely behind Valenzuela.

They came within three at 82-85 but were stopped on their tracks with Raymundo and Noy Castillo pumping in back-to-back triples to ignite a run that eventually settled the outcome of the game.

The Barakos still managed to put up some scare in the fourth despite the ouster of Baguio and Pennisi on early fouls.

Purefoods 99 – Yap 29, Raymundo 27, Pingris 13, Lanete 10, Simon 7, Salvador 4, Adducul 4, Castillo 3, Yap R. 2, Larong 0, Yee 0.

Red Bull 90 – Valenzuela 26, Baguio 14, Pennisi 12, Adriano 10, Cruz 7, Sharma 6, Duncil 5, Hrabak 4, Bugia 3, Ybanez 3.

Quarterscores: 28-24, 51-43, 77-68, 99-90. ***(www.pba.com.ph)***

SLR makes it back-to-back over Alaska, goes ahead 2-1

MANILA, Philippines—The Sta. Lucia Realtors may lack playoff experience, but certainly they're not wanting in energy, determination and heart.

Led by Kelly Williams, who was playing inspired ball in front of his Cebuana mother, Andrea, the Realtors once again held Alaska below the century mark and came away with a 91-82 victory in Game 2 of their semifinals series Friday night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

The Realtors, who are eyeing their first-ever Finals appearance in an all-Filipino conference, trailed 78-79 with 4:30 remaining but closed the fourth quarter with a 13-3 run for a second straight win and a 2-1 lead in their best-of-seven series, moving within two wins of advancing to the Last Dance.

Williams, the top pick of the 2006 Draft who went on to win Rookie of the Year honors at season's end, finished with 27 points—matching his highest output this conference—and added 12 rebounds, his 14th double-double in the tourney. His three-point play with 3:51 left in the fourth gave the Realtors the lead for good, 81-79 time down to 3:01 remaining.

After Willie Miller split his free throws to make the count 80-81, Dennis Espino (18 points) scored on an offensive rebound and Nelbert Omolon (13 points, 12 rebounds for his first double-double in the conference) scored on a fastbreak following a turnover by Sonny Thoss to make it a five-point lead 85-80 that was never threatened the rest of the way.

"We started poorly, trailed at halftime but my players never lost heart. We regrouped and came out with a lot of spunk in the second half. In the end our efforts were rewarded," said Sta. Lucia coach Boyet Fernandez during the post-game interview.

"We're happy to be leading. But it's just one game. I don't want to make any pronouncement. We'll just take it one game at a time. I'm sure Alaska will be come back strong in Game 4," added Fernandez, who played 42 games for the Aces in 1997.

For the second straight game, the Realtors overshadowed Alaska's experience factor with their energized game, hustle and tough defense that again silenced the Aces' veteran backcourt trio of Willie Miller, Jeffrey Cariaso and Mike Cortez.

Sta. Lucia 91 – Williams 27, Espino 18, Yeo 17, Omolon 13, Miranda 6, Aquino 5, Reyes 3, Gonzales 2, Mamaclay 0, Coronel 0, Daa 0.

Alaska 82 – Miller 28, Ferriols 17, Cortez 10, Thoss 9, Bono 7, Cariaso 5, Laure 4, Dela Cruz 2, Quinahan 0.

Quarterscores: 17-21; 36-41; 61-61; 91-82. ***(www.pba.com.ph)***

STEWART

From Page 28

and the 30th Annual SSC Ocean Tank Swim. "I am tired and not feeling well. I'm glad it is over for the weekend. I can rest now and look forward for the international meet.

Stewart said the international meet will be a lot bigger and better event for SSC and its swimmers.

He just finished putting in the names and times of the Japanese team that competed in the 3rd Annual Heptathlon Meet. "I am doing this from 2am to 6am then I went to PIC for the ocean swim and I have not slept all day. It's a lot of work but I am willing to do this all over again."

The International Swim meet, where off-island teams will also compete, will be held on Feb. 29 and March 1, Friday and Saturday. The ocean swim around the World War II tanks will be on March 2, Sunday.

The list of winners in the Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim were led by Willie Garon as the first male finisher in the 1,000-meter Meek swim, while the first SSC athlete was Neri Gutzonwiller-Malakut.

Grace Kimball topped the Tweener 3,000m event with Mieko Carey as the first adult out of the water. Cooper Graf topped the 5,000-meter Mighty event.

Stewart is also training some of the Masters and youth swimmers for the upcoming 7th XTERRA Saipan Championships on March 8. "Most of them [Masters swimmers] will do XTERRA individually while some of the kids are doing the relay."

Stewart said he is not yet sure if Graf would do XTERRA individually or in a team. "All I know he has been training for it."

Stewart has invited other swimmers from U.S. Guam, Japan, Palau, and the Marshall Islands to join the 3rd Annual Heptathlon Meet where they participated in the "virtual meet" by sending via email their results. "I will then tabulate everything for the final results and awards."

Teams from the U.S., Guam Japan, Palau, the Marshall Islands have committed to compete. Stewart expected at least 10 teams to swim and he added he might host two or three more races this year.

For more information about SSC and their events, call Michael Stewart at 287-9474 or 287-WISH.

NMIVA

From Page 28

fled off to pair with a pro.

From April 4 to 6, NMIVA will host the JAM Attack Volleyball tournament and will be followed by the PIC Spring 4-Person Beach Volleyball League, which opens on April 10.

April will also see the return of the indoor open gym nights at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, where NMIVA members will get the chance to practice to prepare for the scheduled opening of the indoor volleyball league on June 23.

But before the indoor specialists get the chance to showcase their high-flying skills at the Ada gym, beach volleyball action returns in May for the 2nd Queen of the Beach Volleyball Tournament and the 10th Annual Seaside Grill Beach Volleyball Weekend from June 13 to 15.

NMIVA officials will also hold a VCP Level I coaches course to all public and private high school coaches and other interested individuals from May 12 to 19.

The month of August is reserved for the Hyatt Beach Volleyball Tournament with the schedule to be announced as the event nears.

On Sept. 18, the PIC Fall 4-Person Beach Volleyball League opens, while the open indoor gym nights return at the Ada gym from October to December to prepare players for the 4-Person Indoor Volleyball Tournament on Nov. 23.

The 2-Person Reverse Co-ed Grass Tournament returns on Dec. 7, which also marks NMIVA's season-ending event.

For more information, call NMIVA president Jon Cramer at 234-7976 or email him at seaexec@picsaipan.com.

SEESAW

From Page 28

place with a 4-2 slate followed by Fanians and Ol'Aces' 3-2 cards. Former co-leader Home Boyz dropped to sixth place with their even 3-3 records.

Winless Ma Numel'u and Beach Jammers, with their 0-5 slates, complete the standings.

CH-Hammer cruised to its fourth straight win and handed Ma Numel'u its fifth consecutive loss a 25-20, 25-22, 15-7 decision, while Fanians solidified its hold of fourth place after a 25-21, 25-20, 15-12 sweep of Hom Boyz.

Ol'Aces bounced back from a 25-16, 25-20, 15-10 loss to Menudo last Jan. 29 by beating No Fear. Ol'Aces overcame a first loss to squeeze out a 25-27, 25-21, 15-11 win over No Fear.

Action continues tomorrow with CH-Hammer gunning for its fifth straight win when they face an unpredictable No Fear side at 7pm after the 6pm match between Ol'Aces and Fanians.

Powerhouse Menudo is expected to have an easy time against the winless Ma Numel'u at 8pm, while Beach Jammers take on Home Boyz in the 9pm final game.

In the women's side, Pikan Gaga made the necessary adjustments in the second set to eke out a 21-25, 25-20, 15-9 triumph over Seikid.

It was Pikan Gaga's third straight win to continue to lead the five-team field. They are followed by the Beach Jammers' 2-1 mark with Ta Chagi and Seikid holding on to 1-2 slates. YoYo's, 1-3, complete the standings.

In other games, Ta Chagi defeated YoYo's, 25-18, 26-24, 7-15, while Seikid downed Ta Chagi, 12-25, 25-17, 15-13.

Pikan Gaga guns for its fourth straight win when they go up against Ta Chagi in the 7pm second game after the scheduled 6pm match between Seikid and the Beach Jammers tomorrow, Feb. 5.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	36	8	.818	–
Toronto	25	21	.543	12
New Jersey	20	27	.426	17 1/2
Philadelphia	18	29	.383	19 1/2
New York	14	33	.298	23 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	31	18	.633	–
Washington	24	21	.533	5
Atlanta	19	24	.442	9
Charlotte	18	30	.375	12 1/2
Miami	9	36	.200	20

Central Division

Detroit	33	13	.717	–
Cleveland	26	20	.565	7
Indiana	19	29	.396	15
Chicago	18	28	.391	15
Milwaukee	18	30	.375	16

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	32	14	.696	–
Dallas	31	14	.689	1/2
San Antonio	29	16	.644	2 1/2
Houston	27	20	.574	5 1/2
Memphis	13	34	.277	19 1/2

Northwest Division

Utah	30	18	.625	–
Denver	28	18	.609	1
Portland	27	19	.587	2
Seattle	12	35	.255	17 1/2
Minnesota	10	36	.217	19

Pacific Division

Phoenix	33	14	.702	–
L.A. Lakers	29	16	.644	3
Golden State	29	19	.604	4 1/2
Sacramento	22	24	.478	10 1/2
L.A. Clippers	14	30	.318	17 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Atlanta 104, New Jersey 92
Orlando 121, Indiana 115
Cleveland 98, L.A. Clippers 84
Utah 110, Memphis 91
Houston 91, Milwaukee 83
Denver 117, Charlotte 101
Sacramento 105, Chicago 101
Seattle 86, New York 85

DUBAI DESERT CLASSIC SCORES

Third Round

Ernie Els, South Africa	68-72-65	205
Henrik Stenson, Sweden	68-70-68	206
Lee Westwood, England	69-71-68	208
Graeme McDowell, Northern Ireland	67-72-69	208
Tiger Woods, United States	65-71-73	209
Shiv Kapur, India	68-72-69	209
Martin Kaymer, Germany	67-73-69	209
Damien McGrane, Ireland	68-69-72	209
Peter Hedblom, Sweden	69-70-70	209
Sergio Garcia, Spain	68-71-70	209
Paul Broadhurst, England	70-71-69	210
David Frost, South Africa	72-69-69	210
Gary Murphy, Ireland	67-72-71	210
Ross Fisher, England	69-70-71	210
Soren Hansen, Denmark	68-72-70	210
Thomas Levet, France	67-71-72	210
Simon Dyson, England	67-77-67	211
Luis Oosthuizen, South Africa	73-69-69	211
Peter O'Malley, Australia	68-73-70	211
Ian Poulter, England	70-71-70	211
Scott Hend, Australia	67-72-72	211
Otto Hennie, South Africa	69-70-72	211
Paul McGinley, Ireland	71-72-69	212
Pelle Edberg, Sweden	67-74-71	212
Jean-Baptiste Gonnet, France	72-68-72	212
Andrew Coltart, Scotland	69-71-72	212

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

NMIVA Indoor Standings

Men's Division

	W	L	PF	PA	SW
Islanders	5	1	338	336	10
Menudo	4	1	312	239	13
CH-Hammer	4	2	352	313	11
Fanians	3	2	293	282	9
Ol'Aces	3	2	292	303	7
Home Boyz	3	3	353	347	10
No Fear	2	3	307	298	8
Ma Numel'u	0	5	267	327	3
Beach Jammers	0	5	257	326	1

Women's Division

	W	L	PF	PA	SW
Pikan Gaga	3	0	187	164	6
Beach Jammers	2	1	165	172	5
Ta Chagi	1	1	172	166	4
Sekid	1	2	170	186	4
YoYo's	1	3	235	241	5

PF-Points for
PA-Points allowed
SW-Sets won

Tigers hope championship will carry on in SML

JON PEREZ

The Tigers Reno Celis eyes the ball as he prepares to hit in the pitch of Team Rubak's Darwin Masaharu in their playoff game in the Masters Baseball League last month at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipan tribune.com
REPORTER

Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers manager Tony Rogolifoi is hoping their title-clinching victory in the Masters Baseball League would continue in the upcoming season of the 3rd Annual Budweiser-Saipan Major League.

The Tigers, formerly known as the Masters in the 2007 season, will open up the 2008 Budweiser SML against the defending champion Tanapag Falcons on Feb. 25.

Both teams will pick up where they left off last year and will take the field after the brief opening ceremony at 6:30pm at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

Last season, the third seeded Falcons completed their own happily-ever-after ending by sweeping the fourth-ranked Masters in their best-of-five title series. The Falcons rallied back from a 9-2 deficit to squeeze out a 10-9 win in Game 3 over the Masters to complete a three-game sweep.

The Falcons drew first blood in their title series against the Masters when they squeezed out an 11-inning 16-15 win. Game 2 was a different story as the Falcons' relied on a Mike Pangelinan double in the top of the ninth and their pitchers in the bottom half of the inning to score a 12-10 come-from-behind win.

"Hopefully, [we would] carry our winning spirit to that game. I expect to maintain the same roster for the upcoming season," Rogolifoi said. "If we can pick up additional pitchers I believe that would further solidify our lineup since we expect this season to be a long one."

The former Division of Sports and Recreation director said he was not surprised on how the Tigers played in the postseason of the Masters league since the intensity of the finals is a lot different than in the regular season. "I had expected my team to raise their level of play during the post season games."

Rogolifoi said focus and determination to win at all cost guided the Tigers in the postseason and they demonstrated their will to win on the field during the finals against the title-favorite Saipan Stevedore D9ers, which also won the pennant after finishing with an 8-1 record in the regular season.

The D9ers also went into the finals riding a nine-game winning streak after cruising to a 23-0 blanking of the Viva Poker Korean Dreams in the playoffs and held the psychological edge against the Tigers in the championship, after completing a three-game sweep of the Bob O'Connor-sponsored team in the eliminations.

"We [were up against] a tough team but we managed to play against them and contain their heavy hitters. We committed only one error the entire game and that, to me, signifies the team's sound and effective defensive plays," Rogolifoi said.

"Offensively, our batters came through with timely hits and were able to muster enough runs in the early innings to keep us in a comfortable position. Our defense was close to being perfect except for that one [error]."

He gave credit to the entire team for backing up pitcher Ben Duenas, who had an outstanding job on the mound pitching in no relief.

Rogolifoi said what made the win more sweeter is they pulled off a big upset by beating a strong team. "Winning the championship is obviously, a sweet victory for me and the team most especially, against the pennant champs D9ers, which had compiled the best record in the league. The D9ers are a strong team and I have a lot of respect for them.

"They beat us all three times during the season. However, we kept our composure and our ultimate goal was to work hard and eventually make the finals and that goal became a reality on championship night. There was no game plan at all."

Though the Tigers' performance was below par during the regular season, Rogolifoi advised the team to still play hard and things would turn around for the better. "As far as which team we would be facing in the playoffs, we were prepared. But win or lose, I would have to say it has been a fun season."

SML '08 season opens Feb. 25

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Saipan Major League has set the opening of the 3rd Annual Budweiser-SML 2008 season on Feb. 25, Monday, at 6:30pm at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

A total of eight teams registered with the intention to play in the upcoming league led by defending champion Tanapag Falcons and last year's runner-up Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers, formerly known as the Masters.

The other participating teams are Rock Steady (Bud Kings), Ford Rangers, Korean Dreams, Komoro, D-9ers, and Team Rubak. The eight teams must pay the $800 entrance fee and checks should be made payable to SML.

SML coordinator Tony Rogolifoi said teams were already informed during the Jan. 24 meeting that the deadline of submission of the entrance fee, team rosters, and waiver forms is on Feb. 18.

Feb. 18, Monday, is also the same day all team representatives will meet to finalize the details of the upcoming league. The meeting will be held at 6:30pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gym conference room.

Rogolifoi is requesting managers, coaches, or team representatives to attend the Feb. 18 meeting as they continue their preparation for the opening of the 3rd Budweiser-SML.

The Feb. 25 opening game of the 3rd Annual Budweiser SML will feature a rematch of last year's finals as the Falcons face off with the Masters in the scheduled opening-day contest. They will play after the brief opening ceremony at 6:30pm.

The Tanapag Falcons are expected to field the same championship-winning team next season, while the Masters, now known as the Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers, hope their recent victory in the Masters Baseball League would carry over in the SML's regular season.

For more information, call Rogolifoi at 288-3515.

Evenflow advances to face No-Use in championship

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Evenflow finished off Try-Outs in double overtime in the third and final game of their semifinal series in the 2007-2008 World Organized Rocball Community League last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The win allowed Evenflow to advance to the championship round where it will face early finalist No-Use for the championship of Micronesia's indigenous sport.

No-Use eliminated No-Mercy in a two-game sweep last Jan 26 in the teams' own semifinals best-of-three series.

The rubber match between Evenflow and Try-Outs was exemplified by rallies from both camps.

Try-Outs came on strong and won the first set 23-10. Evenflow came back in the second set with a 15-6 lead and then lost the set, 21-20.

In the third set, Evenflow came out slamming and spiking with a 17-2 point lead but blew it by losing that set, 19-22.

At the end of the third set, Try-Outs was leading in game points, 66-49. To win the game and advance to the championship series, all Try-Outs had to do was win the fourth set.

Evenflow was in a much more serious situation. In order for Evenflow to win the game, they needed to win the fourth set by an 18-point margin; and in a 21-point set, that was not likely to happen.

Evenflow needed to win the fourth set if it wanted any chance to make it out of the semifinals.

It needed to block Try-Outs from juicing-out. That meant that Evenflow needed to win the fourth set by any margin to force the game into overtime. Because in Rocball's quarter/set system of play, the team with the most game points scored, has to win the fourth quarter/set of play to win the game.

In the fourth set, Evenflow and Try-Outs played point for point for the first nine points. Try-Outs shanked a serve at point 9 and sub-scored to point 8. Evenflow jumped all over Try-Out's bad serve and took the lead at 16-8 before Try-Outs was able to get the serve back.

Try-Outs scored up to point 10 before losing the serve again. Evenflow scored a backcourt kee for two points off Try-Outs' serve and that brought them from 19 points to set point 21.

But in Rocball, only the team with the service can finish the game. Evenflow then served for the set point, but Try-Outs scored a point off their serve and won the serve back.

At this point, Evenflow had 21 points and the Try-Outs had 11 points and the serve. Try-Outs shanked the serve, lost a point, and lost the serve to Evenflow at set point. Evenflow served, scored a point, and won the set but not the game. Try-Outs lost the set but not the game.

By winning the fourth set, Evenflow forced the game into overtime but were still at a disadvantage.

Try-Outs only needed to win one overtime set to win the game. Evenflow, meanwhile, had to win two overtime sets to win the game.

In Rocball's quarter/set system, an overtime set can be won at 10 points or a goal, whichever comes first.

Fortunately for Evenflow, the best overtime winning team in the league, it won both sets to win the game and advance to the finals.

Thos coming Saturday, Feb. 9, No-Mercy and Try-Outs will play for third and fourth position titles of the Rocball season and No-Use and Evenflow will play their first game of the best-of-five-series for Rocball's championship.

Wahoo Jackpot Derby set for Feb. 16

The 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby will now set sail on Feb. 16, 2008 after the original date was postponed due to inclement weather.

Mother Nature postponed the original date for the 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby, which was last Jan. 9, as 15-20 knots generating swells from five to seven feet were forecasted during that weekend.

According to the Saipan Fishermen's Association president Gene Weaver, other details about the event remain unchanged and only the derby date and pre-registration has been altered.

Pre-registration is set a day before the derby, Feb. 15, from 5pm to 6:30pm at Smiling Cove Marina. The cost to participate in the derby is $100 for a crew of four and $25 for each additional angler.

SFA would like to thank the Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, DPS Boating Safety Division, Emergency Management Office, and the Marianas Visitors Authority for supporting the event.

For more information about the 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby, contact MVA's Frank Tudela at 664-3200/01 or e-mail at ftudela@mymarianas.com.

Ten boats and many more fisherman heeded John D. Guerrero's call and took to the water in December 2006 in search of a winner as participants of the inaugural Wahoo Jackpot Derby.

The top prize of the inaugural competition went to captain John Tenorio and angler Jack Diaz of the *Ana Maria* who reeled in the catch of the day when they hoisted their 22.55-lbs. wahoo out of the water, and their efforts on the sea brought them a hefty $600 cash prize.

The crew of the *Ana Maria* wasn't the only group of gaffers to take home a share of the prize money, as captain Mark Hanson, Dave Banes, and Narong the Wahoo Wrangler took home $400 for weighing in the most pieces of pisces when they brought the *Sea Amigo* to the docks with three fish on board. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Tigers hope championship will carry on in SML

Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers manager Tony Rogolifoi is hoping their title-clinching victory in the Masters Baseball League would continue in the upcoming season of the 3rd Annual Budweiser-Saipan Major League.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Patriots go for fourth Super Bowl title

This one is for history.

No longer can the New England Patriots ignore it. Beat the New York Giants on Sunday and it means more than winning a fourth Super Bowl in seven years.

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Stewart pleased with weekend events

Graf

Kimball

Garon

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Saipan Swim Club head coach Michael Stewart said the club's trifecta of events this past weekend—3rd Annual Heptathlon Meet and 3rd Annual Meek & Mighty Lagoon Swim—went well without a hitch.

Stewart and SSC started the weekend with the 3rd Annual Heptathlon Meet last Friday and Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi then concluded it with the 3rd Annual Meek & Mighty Lagoon Swim yesterday.

"Everything went well and without a hitch. All kids swam really well and I am glad that it is finally over," said Stewart, who was under the weather after making sure the events went on smoothly. "Our kids swam really well and I am really pleased with that."

Stewart said he was glad that the event is finally over as he prepares for the upcoming International Swim Meet

See STEWART on Page 26

Execution key to Rock Steady's triumph

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Assistant coach Ed Manalili believes execution was the key in the finals of the 2007 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League, which Rock Steady won last Friday night.

Rock Steady defeated the Saipan Stevedore Suns, 92-78, in Friday's finals at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium to complete its back-to-back title bid. Rock Steady is composed mostly of players from the CNMI Men's National Team that competed in the 6th Micronesian Games, which Saipan hosted in 2006.

"It is a battle of execution. I have said that the team that executed more in offense and defense will win the title," said Manalili, who stood in for coach Rufino Aguon and called the shots for Rock Steady during the game. "Our team executed more both offensively and defensively. I have confidence with the boys."

Despite beating the Suns twice, in the regular season and the playoffs, the finals was an all-different ballgame. "We beat them in the last two games but everything is different in the finals. The key is execution and it all boils down to which team will follow their game plan."

JON PEREZ

Steve Rasa, left, of the Saipan Stevedore Suns tries to get past the defense of Mark Wallace, center, and Sivas Awes of Rock Steady in their championship match last Friday in the BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Island-wide Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Manalili said aside from execution he also reminded his players to focus on the game and don't be distracted by the crowd, the intense and physical play, or even the calls made by the referees.

"I told them to play smartly and don't play against the officials. I expect the finals to be a highly physical game and I told them [players] to stay in their game and avoid the distractions."

Rock Steady also has the luxury of a deeper bench against the Suns with Manalili having the opportunity to bring in fresh legs and rest their starters. "Out advantage is we have a strong and deeper bench."

"I think that is another key in the finals as I told my boys to push forward as we gain momentum in the latter stages of the match."

Manalili hopes that the team would stick together to join other leagues and aim for a third straight crown in the Bud Cup. "Hopefully they would be returning. I hope they continue to play together. This is a strong unit right here."

Manalili said he would love to see the CNMI Junior Nationals emulate Rock Steady and as they grow older they would be fill in the spots vacated by the other players.

NMIVA all set for the year

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association released its full set of activities for 2008 with the 16th Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival as the highlight of its events.

They also opened the indoor winter league and held a 14-and-under youth and Rudy Rudeger beach volleyball tournaments in Tinian last month.

NMIVA is now busy preparing for the 16th Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival slated from Feb. 23 to 24 at the Pacific Islands Club sand courts where professionals from the U.S., Korea, and Japan will be competing in several exhibition matches and conducting clinics.

Aside from the Marianas Cup, which is the longest running beach volleyball event in Micronesia, NMIVA will also hold beach volleyball competitions in the Under-14 and Under-17 age groups at Managaha Island

Beach volleyball players will also get the chance to play with and against the pros on Feb. 22 where their names will be raf-

See NMIVA on Page 26

Seesaw battle in men's side, Pikan Gaga ahead in women's

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The battle for the lead in men's division of the 2008 Indoor Volleyball Winter League is becoming a seesaw battle between the Islanders and Menudo, while Pikan Gaga remains on top in the women's side.

The Islanders returned on top of the men's field after a 25-21, 21-25, 15-9 win over the Beach Jammers Thursday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium

It was the second straight win for the Islanders after suffering a 25-21, 25-7, 15-7 loss to Menudo last Jan. 24. It was also their fifth win in six games to stay half a game ahead of Menudo's 4-1 mark.

CH-Hammer, which had a 0-2 start, is currently in third

See SEESAW on Page 26